

Break Nobody's baby

One of the ironies of the current attempts to cut university spending which has already been remarked upon is that a forward-looking course such as Science and Society, set up and run by Professor Tom Stonier at Bradford, looks like being one of the first for the chop.

Stonier himself, who trained as a biologist and then became economist and futurologist, preaching the likely preeminence of education in a post-industrial society, is now spreading a new gospel. It is a symptom of the British disease, he says, "to rush to old orthodoxies in times of stress, to protect excellence and the ivory towers in which it is believed to breed."

The proposal to axe his course, which examines the impact of science and technology on society, and really tries to straddle two cultures in its interdisciplinary approach, is now working its way through various Bradford University committees on its way to the decisive planning/academic committee on December 3.

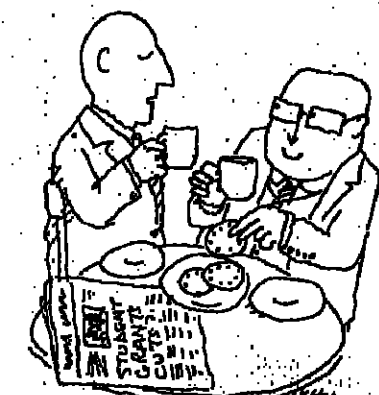
What really tells against it in practical terms, however, is not its forward-looking approach, but its very hybrid nature. At a time when the new rationale is to try and sweep away an over-abundance of small courses - particularly oddball courses which attract the occasional oddball student - Science and Society is especially vulnerable because it has never been really clear which faculty it belongs to. It was put under the Science Board when it began in 1974 but, as Stonier confesses, "there is an element on the Board which thinks we should be in social sciences." Naturally enough, this is not a time when the social sciences faculty are likely to add to their own budget by claiming parenthood.

Meanwhile, the course continues to attract students, though it is far from oversubscribed - one of the factors held against it. It goes for mixed A levels - preferably one science, one maths and one in general studies - and a third of this year's 80 undergraduates are mature students. There is also a post-graduate course, which is not so far threatened.

Science and Society graduates have done pretty well on the employment market so far, in jobs ranging from computer education, computer-aided medical diagnosis and worker cooperatives to local radio, and the present undergraduates have set up their own coordinating committee to fight the phasing out proposal.

Tom Stonier points out ruefully that he left a tenured position in New York to start the course, because he thought the British academic scene was much more interesting. "Now it is the inter-active universities which are under threat."

Fairly undaunted, he continues to look ahead to the post-industrial information society he believes in. He has just completed the manuscript of his new book, *The Wealth of Information* - his sequel to Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.



Sometimes it's best to be a teacher, sometimes a parent - but never both.



Above: Harry Ree at work on the first edition of *Network*.

Network news

"This is your paper - write it" is the message of a new monthly newspaper called *Network*. It was started recently by Coventry's Community Education Development Centre, hoping to reach and link beleaguered workers in community education.

Harry Ree - now retired from his first retirement, when he left York University to teach part-time in a London comprehensive - is helping with the editing, and contributing a column. The first two numbers have pages describing projects in two local authorities, Birmingham and Somerset, and news of projects round the country.

A grant of £500 from Marks and Spencers helped to set things going, but soon *Network* will have to run on subscriptions. Even in hard times, it should be possible for schools and colleges to find £3 a year for two copies each month, to keep up their courage and demonstrate that community education still has backers. Orders to CEDC, Briton Road, Coventry CV2 4LF.

By the Left

The Labour Party's weighty and ambitious new discussion document on the 16-19 generation is the fruit of what seems to have been a particularly diligent working party, and some inspired leadership by Shadow Spokesman Neil Kinnock.

Though it had been at work for around 18 months, working party meetings became far more frequent over the past six months and, according to some accounts, were at their most productive when Kinnock himself was in the chair.

Given the tricky nature of educational politics across the 16-19 divide (never mind the Labour Party's other upheavals), this was no small tribute. How, for example, could you outdo the Macfarlane Committee and reach agreement on a tertiary future, with Max Morris among the regular attenders sticking up for school sixth forms, and Fred Flower and Nick Farley there to press the PE brief?

In the event, they did all pull together, along with other working party members like Ray Hurst, who put in much of the thinking on the careers section, Carol Bailey of the TUC education department, and Phillip Whitehead, MP, who joined the shadow education team last Christmas.

And what kept their feet on the ground, according to at least one working party member, was Kinnock's own over-riding sense of political realities.

This makes all the more pertinent the speculation now beginning in some quarters as to whether Neil Kinnock is likely to be shuffled into a more senior job in the weeks ahead, as Foot gets down to constructing his next Shadow Cabinet.

There is little doubt that his soft-left, anti-Benn line in recent months has encouraged those supporters who

see him as next Party Leader but two, and think that Foot might wish to give him experience in a more front-line job.

But Kinnock himself has said firmly in the past that he wants to see education through to the next election and beyond, and there is no doubt that he has been putting in plenty of time and effort. It would certainly be education's loss now if he were moved just when he is beginning to master the brief.

Desirable situations

Two of the more interesting headships in the world of sixth form colleges are up for grabs.

Soon to become vacant is the job of principal at Atlantic College, in south Wales, the first international sixth form college to be founded by the United World Colleges movement. The present holder, Mr David Sutcliffe, is off to head a new UWC in Italy next autumn.

Although he was a teacher at the college when appointed head, word is that this time around new blood is likely to be sought.

A newcomer will find him or herself living in the beautiful surroundings of a cliff-top, castle-based campus, with alert and interesting students and highly committed staff. But there will be headaches in the form of escalating costs and the need to rethink exactly what international education is all about in the post-Brandt world of the 1980s.

Applicants would be wise to stress their liking for gung-ho outdoor activities. Diving, cliff rescue and farming figure large on the after-lunch curriculum, and David Sutcliffe was often to be seen striding about in his wet suit.

Also available shortly is the headship of another United World College - Pearson College, on the glorious western seaboard of Canada. The peace and international brotherhood movement certainly knows how to pick its locations.

Reminder

The TES offers prizes for the best accounts of what it was like to change school from anyone aged between seven and 16 who changed at the beginning of this term, for any reason.

We want to know what was alarming and what was exciting, what took children by surprise and what pleased or discouraged them.

There will be two first prizes of £25 and five runner-up prizes of £10 in each of two age-groups, seven to 11 and 12 to 16. In addition, the two first prizewinners will win £100 for their school funds.

Entries from pairs or small groups are fine, but prizes must be shared. Drawings are welcome, and will be paid for if printed (remember, we cannot print colour). Written entries should not be longer than 1,000 words (they can, of course, be shorter).

All entries should be legibly written on one side of the paper, and should carry the name(s), age(s), school and home address of the competitor(s). The competition will be judged by the Editor, and his decision will be final. Entries will not be returned, no correspondence will be entered into, and copyright on all entries will be retained by *The TES*. The closing date is December 18, 1981. Entries should be sent to "Changing Schools" competition, The Times Educational Supplement, PO Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ.

Aristides

Next week

"All assessment corrupts, and absolute assessment corrupts absolutely." Maurice Holt previews his new book: *Evaluating the Evaluators*.

The contracting curriculum: John Stephens on the case for music.

Arts: Hilary Finch previews the Schools Prom; Sue Lerman on new films about childhood.

Books: Margaret Spencer reviews the Schools Council Project *Extending Beginning Reading*.

Special pages on Children's books.

Personal column Status symbols Ted Wragg

"Step forward anyone in favour of paying good teachers more money." Try that one in a room full of scale one teachers and you will be killed in the rush. The appeal of recognizing skill by disbursing extra loot into the pockets of the competent is seductive and immediate.

The only problem is that, like so many of the best ideas, it is not quite so simple as it sounds. It would have been easy back in the nineteenth century, when training institutions were called "normal schools" because there was one single approved "norm". New teachers were all poured into the same mould, their heads filled not as today with son-of-Piaget, Bernstein-rides-again and a host of twentieth-century gurus, but with identical dross about cupes and bays and the watersheds of Europe, and kitted out with a "get-em-by-the-throat" style of delivery.

Nowadays so many different styles of teaching are endorsed by some and deplored by others it is no longer a straightforward matter. The easy way out is our present system of giving money for running the school library or coordinating music rather than teaching skillfully.

The worst example I ever encountered of rewarding status rather than competence occurred when I once went to a college governor's meeting. As I parked in the staff car park a well-dressed man, thinking I was a student, rushed over to tell me off for parking in the wrong place.

When he learned I was a new governor, the obsequious creep immediately stopped all traffic and ushered me into his own personal parking space. It was then I discovered that the highest paid car park attendant in Britain was the college vice-principal, unless the managing director of ICI happens to steward his own forecourt.

Summaries of research into effective teaching have often reached the same conclusion: there are teachers who are well thought of by the heads, those well liked by the children, some given good grades when inspected, and teachers whose classes obtain high test scores. Unfortunately they tend to be different teachers, with a few appearing on everyone's best buy list. We all like to think we can recognize a good teacher, but the person sitting next to us might disagree.

Almost the only use in recent times in Britain of merit payments, common in some countries, occurred in the late sixties in universities, when the pay settlement allowed an

extra increment for "merit" for one in every four lecturers. The administration of this unexpected largesse was hilarious to behold. Some departments opted for publishing records, and gave booty to good researchers who mumbled inaudibly in half-deserted classrooms. Others rewarded the youngest on the grounds that they were most hard up, or the oldest as consolation for surviving. Some really tried to reward merit, and one head of department was rumoured to have secured an increment for his mistress for reasons that were never made public.

The difficulties of deciding something so contentious as effectiveness have led to three common solutions in other countries. The first is an ashamed *patronage*. The head is given a number of merit awards which he dispenses as he wishes, with or without consultation.

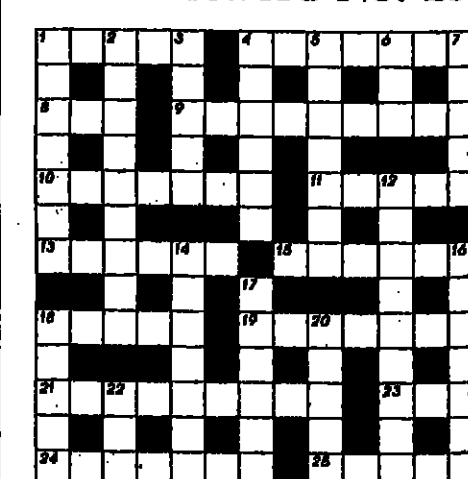
The second is outside inspection by itinerant government hives, who don their dirty raincoats and sit in the back corners of classrooms appraising skills with some kind of checklist rested on their embossed briefcase. The system tends to favour keep-around extraverts, and the quiet, methodical teacher who gets on with things over a period is often thought of as dull.

There is, incidentally, a rare condition called Gruder's Syndrome, a strange compulsive urge to rate the whole of human activity on a musical scale. Sufferers have been known to sit at breakfast holding a curls giving it 5.9 for technical merit. The only cure is to become a LM1.

Thirdly there is consensus, often including judgment by one's peers where the views of several people are pooled. This can cause change when teachers sit in of persons to rate their fellows for merit payments. No one has yet discovered a convincing way of persuading someone who was not awarded a merit payment that he is still meritorious and a worthy colleague.

Perhaps the solution is to go for an international jury system. Cops could be put on during the Emulsion Song Contest. "Finally Miss Elspeth Scattergood's well-earned lesson on tadpoles and sticky toes at East Swinshire County Primary. Come in Milan... We seem to have lost the Italian Jury. Hold on, think we've got Klaus Fischer from Vienna. Artistic impression first please."

TES Crossword No. 25



Across

- 1 Forget's block (5)
- 4 Didn't go with on (5)
- 8 Author's place! (7)
- 9 Massaging the middle may prevent it (3)
- 10 Scrap-mechanic! (9)
- 11 It's expected to be unaffected (7)
- 12 It has a small part in a big picture (5)
- 13 Served up! (6)
- 15 Much time and trouble is taken in its drafting (6)
- 16 Scene of combat a long time back (3)
- 19 In a scramble, can go to (5)
- 21 Procrastinate when it's time to get up (9)
- 23 Bottom, for example, of a ship (3)
- 24 A live product that's repeated (7)
- 25 Literary work? Yes, as it starts out (5)

by Ruth

Down

- 1 A London club (5)
- 2 Food production (5)
- 3 School let down (5)
- 4 Band in the theatre (5)
- 5 Suggesting a doctor's bill perhaps (5)
- 6 Member of a school staff (3)
- 7 The sailor has to wait a card (5)
- 12 Old-time (5)
- 14 It's possibly what you'd show a judge (7)
- 16 Granted, it can't help (7)
- 17 European may be (5)
- 18 He pretends to wait (5)
- 19 An act with appeal (5)
- 20 A subject (5)
- 22 Its wishes are violent (5)
- 23 A rule (3)

Solutions to puzzle No. 24

- 1 Across: 1. Forget's block (5)
- 2 Down: 1. A London club (5)
- 3 Across: 3. School let down (5)
- 4 Down: 4. Didn't go with on (5)
- 5 Across: 5. Suggesting a doctor's bill perhaps (5)
- 6 Down: 6. Member of a school staff (3)
- 7 Across: 7. The sailor has to wait a card (5)
- 8 Down: 8. Author's place! (7)
- 9 Across: 9. Massaging the middle may prevent it (3)
- 10 Down: 10. Scrap-mechanic! (9)
- 11 Across: 11. It's expected to be unaffected (7)
- 12 Down: 12. It has a small part in a big picture (5)
- 13 Across: 13. Served up! (6)
- 14 Down: 14. It's possibly what you'd show a judge (7)
- 15 Across: 15. Much time and trouble is taken in its drafting (6)
- 16 Down: 16. Scene of combat a long time back (3)
- 17 Across: 17. Granted, it can't help (7)
- 18 Down: 18. He pretends to wait (5)
- 19 Across: 19. In a scramble, can go to (5)
- 20 Down: 20. A subject (5)
- 21 Across: 21. Procrastinate when it's time to get up (9)
- 22 Down: 22. Its wishes are violent (5)
- 23 Across: 23. Bottom, for example, of a ship (3)
- 24 Down: 24. A live product that's repeated (7)
- 25 Across: 25. Literary work? Yes, as it starts out (5)

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Redundant and straight on the dole

by Richard Garner

The first teacher to be made compulsorily redundant and to go straight on to the dole queue is likely to be a 47-year-old primary school teacher in the Isles of Scilly.

Mr John Snowden, who teaches at St Mary's junior school, the only school on the island of St Mary, has been told he is to be made redundant from December 31. The Isles of Scilly is such a small education authority (and autonomous in its own right) that there is virtually no chance of someone going for premature retirement to save his job and no chance whatsoever of redeployment to any other teaching post.

Mr Snowden has taught at the school for 10 years and is reluctant to leave the island. "I have just been offered," he said, "and I want to be there so that I at least have some chance of seeing my children."



John Snowden

Mr Ivan Glover, chief executive of the education authority for the Isles of Scilly, said that the number of teachers at the school had been reduced because the school roll had fallen, from 180 when Mr Snowden had been engaged, to its present level of 130. "I said," he said "but - being such a small island - we don't have the same options of redeployment and voluntary redundancy open to us that other authorities have."

Teachers' union leaders have been at their toes from John O'Grady to Mr Snowden, who has applied for another job on the mainland, intends to take his case to an industrial tri-

Sheffield to try job-sharing scheme for teaching staff

by Sarah Bayliss

An opportunity for teachers to engage in job-sharing, while avoiding the uncertainty of a part-time contract, is being offered by a local authority.

Teachers and other education staff in Sheffield have received a letter saying the city council has approved in principle the idea of two or more staff sharing the responsibility of one full-time job. Volunteers are invited to apply.

Sheffield's offer is believed to be the first of its kind by an education authority. At least four teachers, including a married couple, have expressed an interest.

Mrs Joan Barton, chairman of the schools' sub-committee, said job-sharing for teachers fitted in with the Labour council's commitment to ease unemployment, but there were other

benefits for everyone involved.

The details of the scheme are still under discussion, but the council hoped to offer job-sharers most of the benefits associated with a full-time job except, of course, full-time pay. Employment protection, currently denied to part-timers, would have to be guaranteed, she said.

Teachers on a full timetable often found their work taxing. "We believe there are some teachers who would welcome the chance to put their energy and enthusiasm for the job into two or three days a week, while retaining some of the terms of a full-time contract."

While volunteers were being invited from the existing teaching force, it was hoped the scheme would result in unemployed teachers being taken on.

If two full-timers wanted to share

one job, one vacancy would be created for a new member of staff or even for two more job-sharers, Mrs Barton said.

She hoped it might create more opportunities for scale-one teachers and probationers. For them half a job would certainly be better than no job at all.

A spokesman for Sheffield's education department stressed that no teaching job would be shared if the effect was likely to be "contrary to good educational practice." For example, it would be harmful to primary children to have too many staff sharing one classroom teaching post.

But for a primary class to have two staff sharing one job might provide the children with "consistency plus variety", and that would be a good thing.

Campaign for creation

by Hilary Wilce

Schoolchildren in Wales are being told that the Bible story that God created the world in six days is true.

Dr Monty White, an administrator at the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology, is spreading the evangelical message that the theory of evolution is false.

As well as addressing church groups across the country, he is now invited to speak at one or two local schools a term.

"If I'm invited to take a school assembly, I try and show there are scientific things in the Bible. If I talk to young children, I tell them that God made dinosaurs, they did not evolve. If I'm addressing a Christian

Union, then my message is very evangelical. In a general studies class I'll talk about the implications of evolutionary teaching."

A BBC film on the growing creationist lobby, to be shown on Sunday evening, shows Dr White talking to pupils at Hendre Junior School, in Caerphilly.

The headmaster, Mr H. Lewis, said he invited Dr White to speak after pupils had completed a project about prehistoric monsters. "He only brought forward his theory of creation in the last five or six minutes. He didn't go into it all that deeply, and the children accepted it as just one avenue of research."

No cause for high-rise anxiety

Living in high-rise blocks does not significantly affect children's health or school performance, says a new report.

But when a mother is unhappy and dissatisfied with the flat, it adds, the children do less well at school. If a mother is "fairly satisfied" with her high rise home, her children's reading age is fractionally - 0.5 of a year - above the general level.

If a mother is "very dissatisfied" the average reading age is 0.2 below. The findings are published by the National Children's Bureau in the autumn issue of *Concern*.

For the few Manchester after the Minister's decision: a near-empty sixth form classroom at Spurley Hey High School. The decision, to reject an overall system of sixth form colleges, has left city schools in confusion, and raised important questions for other authorities hoping to reorganize their 16-19 provision. Report page 6.

To err is OK - official

by Bob Doe

Children should not be afraid of making mistakes in their arithmetic according to the Mathematical Association journal *Mathematics in Schools*.

Mr Roger Bainbridge of the City of Liverpool College of Higher Education says pupils can learn by making errors, though most teachers do not show them how.

"Primary school pupils should be ever mindful of the need for accuracy. But a definite change of attitudes towards errors is urgently called for," says Mr Bainbridge.

"Young learners should not be afraid of making mistakes. They should be shown that mistakes can help them to understand certain procedures and concepts more fully."

Children learnt more effectively if they were shown how to detect errors immediately by self-checking procedures.

"To err is human, but for teachers not to capitalize on this is unforgivable," says Mr Bainbridge.



This Week

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The message of Manchester

Sir Keith Joseph's decision to reject Manchester's sixth form college proposals has far-reaching consequences for teachers in secondary schools throughout Manchester and for their colleagues elsewhere. This is not a dry-dust matter of administration and educational politics: this is going to touch the working lives of teachers up and down the country, wherever pupil numbers are falling and plans have to be made to cope with the consequences.

Sir Keith has acted on one simple principle: that it cannot be right to "destroy" a good school in order to solve an administrative riddle. In the words of the letter conveying his decision: "The Secretary of State is not satisfied that, on balance, the potential educational advantages which the Authority claims for the majority of pupils in Manchester... are sufficiently certain to justify the damage which will be done to some schools which have proved their worth under existing arrangements". His point is a real one: there are cons as well as pros to any reorganization. One of the certain things to place on the debit side is the trouble and strife which any general upheaval must cause. Sir Keith regards the "potential" benefits which Manchester hopes to achieve as speculative and hypothetical, while the dismantling of Parrs Wood's sixth form would result in wholly predictable "damage".

The trouble with simple principles is that they produce simple answers. It is of the nature of almost any reorganization scheme that the gains are likely to be speculative while the drawbacks can be clearly demonstrated. It is not only the drawbacks of change, however, which can be plotted with accuracy; there are also the manifest weaknesses of the present situation in Manchester which have to be set against the more successful outcomes. There is nothing speculative about the unsatisfactory

nature of what is going to happen to Manchester schools if the present arrangements are prolonged.

The reasons which Sir Keith gives for turning down the Manchester plan need to be examined carefully for the guidance they offer as to his future policy. Sir Keith is now making it clear that in circumstances like those prevailing in Manchester (which may well be mirrored in Birmingham and some other big cities) he would favour a scheme in which a few secondary schools running from 11 to 18 with sixth forms for the whole city were protected, while the rest were restricted to the 11 to 16 age range.

This is the "mushroom" model on which the Macfarlane Report earlier this year included a critical paragraph:

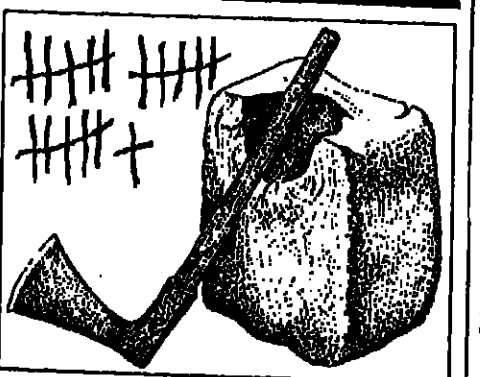
Mushroom sixth forms of this kind have existed successfully in the past, but were more often originally created in areas where new or reorganized schools were still growing and had not yet attained capacity to provide an adequate range of sixth forms. The position is obviously rather different at a time of contraction, when schools which have previously catered for the full range of age and ability may have to adjust to a reduced age range and to seeing their older pupils transfer to other institutions. That still may be the best solution for the pupils but there are difficulties for the contributing schools. Schools which retain sixth forms tend to have more prestige in the eyes of many parents and are apt to be the most popular choice for pupils at 11 or 12. The residual schools then suffer both from failing to attract a due proportion of the most able pupils, as well as from limitations of staffing that go with a smaller school and the absence of advanced work.

Here, too, the benefits are speculative while

the disadvantages can be fairly easily forecast. Of course, such a scheme can - as Fred Naylor indicated in his paper for Sir Keith Joseph's Centre for Policy Studies - be advocated as a back door method of recreating grammar schools. Sir Keith is too obviously a man of principle to advocate so devious a way of reintroducing selection at 11 - one which did so informally, without even the safeguards of fairness offered by a formal 11-plus. But this would be the logical outcome if he were to try to impose mushroom-type arrangements as the Conservatives' preferred solution.

It would also bring to a halt the hesitant steps authorities have been taking to review their sixth form arrangements in response to the Macfarlane report. Manchester will now have to go back to the drawing board, at least until September 1983, with its next steps dependent on local elections and national politics no less than on the immediate needs of its schools. The level of costs will remain unnecessarily high. Uncertainty will discourage good teachers who will be more inclined to look for jobs elsewhere. The drift from the schools to further education will gather momentum, to make the schools' difficulties even greater. And, faced with the signals which Sir Keith is putting out, Manchester - and other authorities, too - are quite likely to mark time indefinitely and wait for the ideology at Elizabeth House to change once more.

All this must be bad for teachers and pupils as the ripples from the Manchester debacle spread through the system. Sir Keith may be aware of the strength of the opposition to a coexistence of 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools. Or else, he may dismiss this opposition because he concludes that it stems from an opposite ideology to his own. Macfarlane had managed to explore these issues pragmatically. Sir Keith will have a lot to answer for if he polarizes the debate along party lines.



A vacuum which needs filling

Mr. Tebbit has at last put the industrial training boards out of their agony by confirming the death sentence on 16 of them and relieving seven. The uncertain growth of the ITBs since 1964 has tempted every incoming Government to pull them up by the roots to test their staying power. Conservative governments want to respond to employers' pleas to let them be the arbiters of training without bureaucratic and financial strings. Labour, on the other hand, listens to trade union arguments for more public intervention.

It has to be remembered, however, that it was a Conservative government in 1964 which finally recognized the need to set up some collective mechanism, industry by industry, to share the costs and spread the gospel of training. Since then progress has been uneven. Some, like the Engineering Training Board, have prospered and become a powerful force for the modernization of training in a wide range of manufacturing industry. It would have been easy to have thrown this away. In many other cases, there has been less

No Comment

Statutory Information for Parents: Memorandum of Guidance. You will have received last year a copy of the regulations made under the Education Act 1980 which set out the minimum requirements... If a Head has to make some general comment as to the philosophy, purpose or ethics of the school it would be appropriate at an early stage, but this is not required under the regulations. Under the terms of the Act the meaning of education is not relevant.

From a circular to headteachers of primary, special and nursery schools from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Giving a nudge to Mount Everest

Tuesday's conference at Church House, Westminster, to discuss the Rampton report on education of West Indian children, was a strange affair. If you recall, this was the first time which appeared in the summer in circumstances of acrimony caused by Mr. Macfarlane's decision to sack Mr. Anthony Rampton and replace him with Lord Swann as chairman of the inquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups.

Exactly why Mr. Carlisle did what he did and why he did it in such an uncharacteristically brutal manner, remains a minor mystery. Tuesday's conference was, in Lord Swann's opening words, to "give a nudge" to the things said in the Rampton report. In other words, it was an attempt to pick some of the pieces which got spilled as a result of the intrigue which undermined his predecessor.

The trouble is, of course, that to mountains of prejudice and inertia you cannot give more than a nudge. Officially, the Government is now consulting all and sundry about Rampton. The long-drawn-out business of deciding how to collect statistics by which to monitor the performance of black pupils continues. But after 10 years and more of demonstrations, reports, Select Committee inquiries, HMI surveys there are a number of identified things which need to be done. Mr. Robert Aitken, the director of education, advised heads to send children home as it was unwise to keep them in unheated and unstaffed premises. He also asked them to give pupils work to do at home.

There is a lot of initiative and

it was Professor Little who chaired the sessions on "the task facing the schools" at the Church House meeting and pin-pointed the well-documented issues on which schools what is urgently required, not yet more, is a very little action is being taken at national or local level to assess and meet the educational needs of these pupils.

Nothing new, here, of course, - that's frustrating thing about it - all that is needed is a lot of hard work and in-service training. Although many of the attitudinal changes which are needed do not, in themselves, cost money, in-service training does and so does the school-based curriculum development to express changed attitudes in action.

If the frustration implicit in the situation kept on breaking through in Church House, it was notably absent from the summiting up to the end by Dr. Bhikhu Parekh. For Dr. Parekh it was literally his Swann song: he is looking for his post as senior lecturer in the department of political studies at Hull, to become the chancellor of a new Indian university at Baroda.

After repeating in shorthand form a summary of the Rampton recommendations, he urged the Swann committee to speed up its time wrestling with the term "racism". As he put it "conceptual development" was needed to prevent "racism" being just a term of abuse covering everything from explicit racial discrimination to xenophobia to ethnic jokes.

Whether it is, in fact, possible to make precise meaning to a word which in its generalized form has become such a powerful political instrument is highly debatable. "Racism" is a similar term which has suffered defeat to the point where it has lost nearly all its meaning. There must be a real danger that "racism" will go the same way.

What Sir Keith Joseph will make of all this nobody knows. His brief introduction to the conference was brief and to the point. He could at least have given some form of welcome to the Rampton report - even a word of appreciation to Tony Rampton himself - although present, was barely mentioned - but there is still time for him to recognize the importance of this whole topic in relation to the future of multi-ethnic Britain. And, of course, that it can fail to be politically correct. But this should not scare off Sir Keith from giving the lead which is needed in what would have special significance in the present time if it came from a Conservative Secretary of State.

Pickets step up action as cleaners and dinner ladies stay out

by Diane Spencer

A strike by 4,000 cleaners and dinner ladies has kept Coventry's 170 schools closed for a second week. Members of the National Union of Public Employees stepped up their action this week by not allowing teachers to cross picket lines in at least two schools.

More than 80 teachers wanting to go to Caludon Castle secondary school to prepare more homework for pupils failed to get through the pickets. At Stoke Park school fifth and sixth formers had to return home because pickets claimed some of the pieces which got spilled as a result of the intrigue which undermined his predecessor.

Members of the National Union of Public Employees are still deadlocked with the council over cuts in working hours and overtime which they claim will mean a 12.5 percent cut in wages.

The Labour-controlled council is proposing to save £2m by £1.2m from the education service. Some cuts were inevitable after a referendum last August which resulted in a narrow vote against rate increases.

Mr. Robert Aitken, the director of education, advised heads to send children home as it was unwise to keep them in unheated and unstaffed premises. He also asked them to give pupils work to do at home.

There is a lot of initiative and

UCG told not to let savings be used elsewhere

by Bert Lodge

The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers is urging the University Grants Committee not to allow money saved by cutting down education departments in universities to be spent on other areas.

At its annual conference in Oxford last weekend, at which 35 universities were represented, the council resolved to make an immediate approach to the UGC, following possible threats to the future of the education departments in Bristol and Durham.

While readily acknowledging that the money received by a university from the UGC is block grant, the council was expressed that vice-chancellors may divert the economies to other studies.

Bristol, where alternatives to closing down are being sought, and Durham, where redundancies are a possibility, are specifically considered. The major European research centre on in-service training is located in Bristol, and the department is also

creativity being shown by teachers. Out of this gloomy situation, there will be some gains: new relationships are being formed between teachers and parents and the community which I hope will be lasting.

Informal meetings were held on Monday but Mr. Aitken thought it unlikely the 170 schools would be returning to normal by today. But he was optimistic about them reopening next week.

Seven hundred fifth and sixth formers have taken their O level and CSE resits in makeshift classrooms in church halls and teachers' centres. They were transported to and from their schools with their own teachers.

According to Mr. Aitken, teachers are spending their time on in-service training, discussing the curriculum, home visiting and making contact with colleagues in other professions.

Mr. Ken Sugarman, head of Eastern Green junior school and local spokesman for the National Union of Teachers, said the situation was "very unpleasant and very worrying." However, teachers had every sympathy with caretakers and cleaners, he said.

A few teachers had joined picket lines as a token gesture of sympathy for short periods, but these had been isolated cases and it was not union policy to do this, he added.

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strong on training teachers from the Third World.

DES seeks rescue of training

by Mark Jackson

The Department of Education and Science is pressing for special measures to rescue the Unified Vocational Preparation programme for school leavers, which is threatened by a Government decision to shut down most of the industrial training boards.

Under the programme, youngsters who have started work in jobs without proper formal training are recruited by their employers for special courses of broad education and practical job skills. It is often described as the forerunner of a national traineeship programme for school leavers.

The distributive board has 22 staff working full time in the regions. The DES says it is concerned about the arrangements for UVP which is its only major contribution to the new schemes for school leavers, and is looking at a number of ideas such as getting the MSC to appoint more field organisers. It is also considering suggesting that the commission should offer financial inducements to colleges to take the initiative in setting up courses.

The commission's senior officials, who have a target of 10,000 UVP

Vocational bias in exams call

The education of fourth and fifth formers should be more vocational and the new combined GCE and CSE exams due in 1987 should help to bring this about, Sir James Hamilton, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education, said on Wednesday.

Sir James told the Standing Conference on Schools Science and Technology in London, "I do not believe schools have moved as far and as fast as they could towards a prevocational approach to education of 14 to 16 year olds."

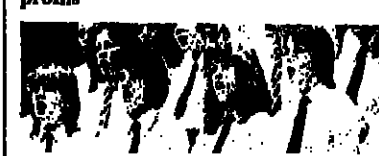
The DES will have the final say on the aims and contents of the new joint 16-plus. He told the SCSST,

that what he had in mind was a more practical and less academic approach but pursued with the same rigour. "Those who are perfectly comfortable in the present academic approach might benefit from this approach as well and I hope this will come about in the new national criteria for the 16-plus and in the 17-plus." The Government was about to make an announcement on the new 17 plus vocational exam for schools and colleges. That exam would have "a benign influence on what happens in the earlier part of schooling," he predicted.

Bob Doe



Top: Huddersfield Intermediate Youth Orchestra, and below: Cheltenham Ladies' College Choir - two of the musical groups in next week's proms



Yorkshire's dash of relish

Almost one third of the participants in next week's School Prom are from two neighbouring education authorities in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Huddersfield Intermediate orchestra, Holmfirth High School choir and instrumental group and Kirkstall Youth orchestra will provide 250-300 of the 1300 young musicians who will be performing on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at the Albert Hall.

From Wakefield, 12 miles to the east, will come the 120 members of the Metropolitan wind orchestra and the Metropolitan band.

Mr. Harold Newcombe, head of instrumental music for Kirkstall, pointed out that the West Riding had a strong musical and choral tradition. "All the Kirkstall performers come from schools within a 10-mile radius of Huddersfield. Kirkstall has won the national award of the National Music Council for authorities twice in the past four years," he said.

The Schools Prom is sponsored by the TES and Commercial Union Assurance.

No extra grant for ILEA

by Sarah Bayliss

The Inner London Education Authority will not qualify for any of the extra Government grant announced last week for encouraging more school leavers to stay on in spite of press reports to the contrary.

And any other education authorities which look set to spend considerably above their grant related expenditure assessments next year are also most unlikely to benefit from the £50m increase in public expenditure, details of which were announced by Sir Keith Joseph, in the House of Commons this week.

Leaders of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities expressed their anger this week at the "dishonesty" of the Government and in particular at suggestions from ministers that they would be monitoring the £50m to ensure it was spent "properly" on the post-16 age group.

"The Government is putting £50m in with one hand while it takes out £1,500m in cuts with the other hand," said Mr. Jack Smart, the AMA Labour leader.

Sir Keith Joseph told the House, "I am confident that all (authorities) will try to make the best use of resources available in order to offer young people courses of value to themselves, their future employers and the nation."

He said that an additional £74m in public expenditure would be allowed for in 1983-84. In making the announcement the Government has effectively increased the total value of GREs by £50m. Individual authorities' GREs are being raised according to the number of unemployed youngsters they have.

The grant, which some authorities will undoubtedly fail to qualify for - because they are already overspent on GREs - will be shared out amongst the remaining education authorities - but not on the basis of their unemployment statistics.

Nor will the Government pay the full cost of the £50m since it meets only a proportion of relevant expenditure with rate support grant.

Union snub to teacher

by Richard Garner

A teachers' leader who took part in an unofficial demonstration over a threat to the jobs of six colleagues on part-time contracts has been told he is ineligible to stand for election to the executive of his union.

Mr. Colin Adams is the National Union of Teachers representative at Alpertown High School in Wembley, London, where about 60 teachers were suspended from union membership during the summer after staging an hour-long protest. They were subsequently reinstated - which Mr. Adams believes should be an end to the matter but the union's legal advisers claim the suspension means he is in breach of a rule which requires people seeking election to the executive to have been a full union member for three years.

Mr. Adams, who first joined the NUT nine years ago, was chosen at a Brent Teachers' Association meeting as its nomination for the executive beating his only rival, current executive committee member, Mr. Malcolm Horne, who had urged the Alpertown teachers not to take part in the demonstration, which was during

Primary need for more BEd staff

Even if the entire output of new BEd graduates goes into primary schools they will, on present figures, fall fewer than half the jobs available in the primary sector by the late eighties, according to the latest Government forecast of teacher manpower needs.

A paper prepared by DES planners which was put before the Government's Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers on Wednesday also shows that to achieve the planned output of 9,500 BEd graduates a year by the mid nineties the proportion of 18-19 year olds who get two or more A levels will have to more than double.

A significant scale-down in the proportion of jobs thought likely to go to returners to the profession is revealed in the papers. Earlier this year DES officials were forecasting this could be as much as 50 per cent. But this was rejected by the committee who estimated a share no higher than 40 per cent. This has been accepted by the department.

A major shift in output from secondary to primary teachers will be imperative to meet the demands of the late eighties and early nineties. The BEd route is the main source of primary teachers but the present intake is only 5,500 a year with no sign of the degree becoming more popular among youngsters. Intending to

Even the whole BEd output at present levels would meet only 49 per cent of the anticipated needs of primary schools in the late 1980s and about 38 per cent of the expected needs of the nineties.

Many more primary teachers will have to come from the one-year postgraduate certificate in education, the paper concludes.

Already the proportion of teachers entering the profession via the PGCE route is 60 per cent and this could rise to 80 per cent by 1992, it is suggested. But too rapid a swing from secondary to primary training could cause severe problems for institutions, particularly among staff unfamiliar with the primary sector.

Platform

Evaluation by teachers of their own classroom performance is now commonplace. Maurice Holt says it is doing more harm than good.

Accountability can damage your health

Until the early seventies, evaluation was a word rarely heard in schools. The idea that a teacher should consciously adopt ways of evaluating his own performance, or that devices other than examinations should be used to test pupils' performance, was remote from the work of schools. What has brought about the growth in evaluation and assessment, and what does it imply? How likely is it to lead to better teaching and learning, and a better curriculum?

Evaluation is a form of reassurance. When living standards are rising, the educational climate is secure. But when money is short and recession beckons, the trust and optimism which nourish an activity like education give way to doubt and fear. The least of accountability celebrates the death of trust.

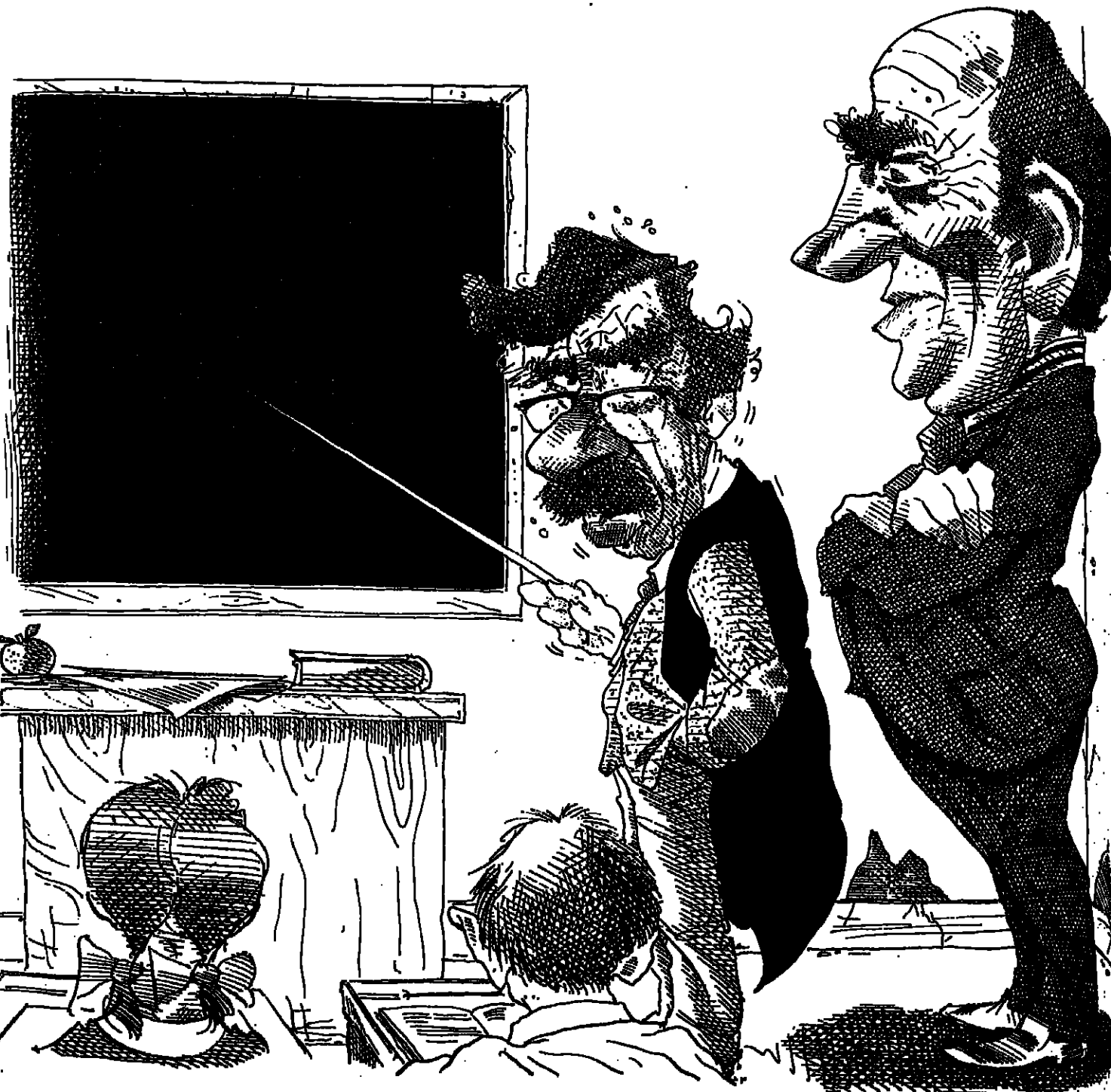
James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976 caught this mood of criticism, and made a sharp contrast with the view of schooling for personal development argued in the Plowden Report of 1967. Education was no longer a good in its own right, but simply a means to society's end: "to equip children for a lively, constructive place in society and also to fit them for a job of work". The subsequent 1977 Green Paper echoed the message: "the need for schools to demonstrate their accountability to the society which they serve requires a coherent and soundly based means of assessment for the educational system as a whole, for schools and for individual pupils".

By this time the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) of the Department of Education and Science had become a big (although secret) spender. It had been given a fair wind by the 1974 Bullock Report, which recommended that standards of literacy should be monitored "on a scale which will allow confidence in the accuracy and value of the findings". Monitoring, it seemed, was not inherently problematic. It was simply a matter of the right technology.

But although it is easy enough to devise tests, it is far from easy to determine what their results mean. What examinations, profiles and all forms of performance testing aim to do is allow conclusions to be drawn about educational activities. But there is immediately a conflict between the aim of the educator, which is to help the pupil achieve understanding, and that of the tester, which is to distil understanding into some observable state. The conflict arises because there need be no logical connexion between a person's state of mind and what we might observe about him or her. When we compare examination results or test scores, we are comparing observable evidence but we are certainly not comparing educational understanding.

Evaluation of a pupil's work is an intrinsic part of the business of teaching. But it is an innate part, and to isolate evaluation and separate it from "the idiom of the activity" - to use Oakeshott's phrase - is to misrepresent the learning encounter. When a teacher thinks about a child and his work, he makes an assessment which draws on the teacher's educational understanding, his humanity and experience, and his observations over a period of time. It is a transient but defensible judgment; it will be expressed in words and shades of meaning and will not aspire to a high order of accuracy or permanence. A test score or a number on a profile misrepresents a complex reality and the larger scale of the evaluation the greater the degree of misrepresentation.

In the event, the original intention to use the APU to evaluate the whole curriculum has been abandoned. The notorious attempt to test "personal and social development" was dropped in curious circumstances, and the only satisfactory explanation is that the DES sees the APU at the limit of its usefulness, and has no desire to throw good mathematics, science and perhaps French are evidently more than enough to satisfy the political imperative which led the DES to set up the APU on American lines. Indeed, the decline in educational spending may yet reveal a decline in test scores. The APU - which occupied no less than two-thirds of the 1979 Conservative manifesto on education as a way of raising standards - could easily bite the hand that has fed it. But the decline in the APU's fortunes does not mean a decline in testing. Another consequence of the urge to evaluate is the growth of interest in school self evaluation. It is the value of knowledge obtained after an action to influence the future conduct of the action. Using an X-ray to discover tuberculosis will do nothing to effect a cure. But while the X-ray will have a negligible effect on the patient's health, the



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Bishop of Manchester admits lack of guidance for heads and governors Church schools seek Muslim policy

by Bert Lodge

Many church schools are faced with many more pupils who are Muslim than in one school in Oldham over 90 per cent of the pupils are Asian. How schools of one faith should meet the problems posed by having a high proportion of pupils belonging to another is tackled by a report this week from the Manchester diocese.

Yet its failure to lay down a clear policy for heads and governors is admitted by the Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Rev Stanley Booth-Clifton.

In Church school education and Islam in multi-faith Manchester, a list of recommendations begins with: "Because of diverse and valid educational and theological standpoints, it seems unlikely that any one diocese policy could be recommended..."

It concludes: "In a diocese comprising many variations the promotion of one policy would not be helpful."

The report follows a working party on the problems of Church of England schools, particularly primary, with a high proportion of Asian pupils.

Yet this does not exceed much more than about 40 per cent but Mr Kenneth Wheeler, assistant to the diocesan director of education, said this week that one school in Oldham had over 90 per cent.

In a foreword to the report the bishop writes: "The document may be criticized for its failure to come down firmly on one side or the other over controversial issues. But to my mind it is vital to look at the facts in an objective way and to listen to various views on the right road ahead."

Mr Wheeler said the document was intended to stimulate discussion in parishes and among boards of governors of the 153 C of E schools. "We don't feel we can state a position which is right for every school in the diocese."

The report opens with contrasting viewpoints about the role of the church school. One, by a head, describes how "we recognize that Islam is the faith of a large number of our children. We encourage them to be proud of their faith, to talk and write about it... We respect each other's faith and find many areas of agreement..."

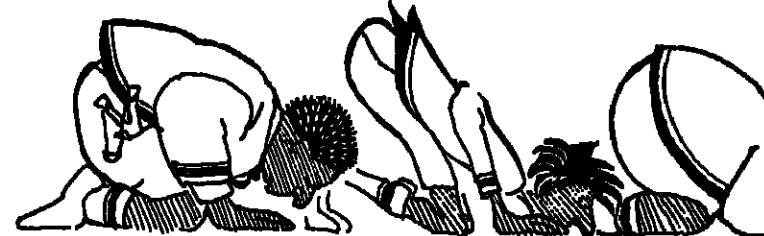
Another, by a vicar and chairman of governors of a school with a very high proportion of Muslim children says: "The church school is or ought to be the Church's front line missionary activity amongst the children in the parish through which it seeks to fulfil its vocation..."

"As the Church had a mission to the Jews (which it still has), the Church today has a mission to the Muslims and it should seek by every available means, particularly its schools, to make Jesus Christ known as the Way, the Truth and the Life."

The report comments that each of these views would find support among certain heads and vicars throughout the diocese. But "it would be wrong to assume that acceptable policies will be found at some middle position between the two."

"In fact, some attempts at compromise may be less understood and hence less successful than consistent policies implemented with integrity, which might attract initial criticism."

Church school education and Islam in multi-faith Manchester Diocesan Church House, 90 Deansgate Manchester, 75p.



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● Culham College Institute, based on the former Church teacher training college, near Abingdon, announced this week it was launching a three year research project into "The role of the church school in the mainstream sector of education."

Less to live on for the lucky few

by Biddy Passmore

A boom in home applications to university will make competition for a university place even fiercer next year, when the first university courses are to close. And those sixth formers who do get a place will have much smaller maintenance grants on which to live.

Latest statistics from the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), show that home applications are seven per cent higher than at the same time last year.

At the same time there appears to have been a further dramatic drop of 17 per cent in applications from overseas students. UCCA points out, however, that only about one third of the expected total number of candidates have so far applied.

Mr William Waldegrave, junior Minister responsible for higher education, confirmed to student leaders on Monday that the Government was looking at plans to abolish the minimum grant of £410, increase the parental contribution and reduce the real value of awards. But no final decisions had been taken.

A delegation from the National Union of Students had gone to meet the Minister to press their claim for a 17.4 per cent increase in grants next year, bringing the grant for London-based students up to over £2,000. But they left the meeting dejected at the news he gave them:

University vice-chancellors have made a further attempt to persuade Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, to think again about the "appalling wastefulness" of the timing of the university cuts.

In a letter to Sir Keith, Dr Albert Sloman, chairman of the vice-chancellors' committee, has repeated his plea to the Education Secretary to spread them out over five years instead of three.

"For little if any additional expenditure you could avoid the massive disruption of the teaching and research of institutions of international standing, you could avoid the bitterness and frustration of school-leavers faced overnight with drastically diminished chances of a university education, and you could avoid the inevitable reduction in the number of highly qualified young men and women whose education and expertise in the competitive world of today and tomorrow the country so desperately needs", Dr Sloman concludes.

Sir Keith calls for caution on the collection of ethnically-based statistics

by Diane Spencer

Consultations on the interim report of the Rampton, now Swann, committee are essential, especially on the sensitive issue of collecting ethnically-based statistics, Sir Keith Joseph said this week.

In a brief speech at the opening of a conference called by the Swann committee, in London, Sir Keith said this issue raised important questions of principle and practice.

Consideration of it must be deferred until interested bodies had the chance to comment, he said. "The matter is too serious, too near to the worries, fears and concern of very many individuals and organizations to be treated in any other way."

There is always a temptation to avoid issues which may touch on a raw nerve; and with this subject there are always enough vague and woolly words, phrases and concepts to fall back on. What is needed is a firm resolve to tackle these questions, and to do so with precision.

The Swann committee gave a unique opportunity to dig deep into these matters and produce a final report which would be convincing because it had taken account of all the factors and not just those which are least sensitive, Sir Keith said.

The conference of 250 people from schools, local authorities, teacher training, Parliament and the ethnic minority communities, spent the rest of the day in four discussion groups. They considered the task for the schools, the role of teachers, links with the community and preparation for adult life.

At the final session, this last group called on the Government to begin implementing the interim report of the committee as it had been the product of wide consultations in the first place.

The Department of Education, the group said, should take the lead to be followed by other departments and local authorities. Additional resources must be provided by central Government.

The group also called for the law on racial discrimination to be strengthened.

Mr Chris Power, advisor for multi-cultural education in Haringey, north London, said his group thought it essential that head teachers should attend similar conferences as a means of changing teachers' attitudes to racism. Local authorities should provide more in-service education for a multi-cultural society and begin appointing more ethnic minority staff, he said.

A few delegates suggested that a pilot scheme should be set up to run a school for black and white children run entirely by black staff. The achievements of the pupils could then be measured against those in mainstream schools.

On the whole, the conference was in favour of keeping ethnic statistics. Dr Bhiku Parekh, from Hull University and a member of the committee, said it was obvious they should be recorded if only to measure the effectiveness of government policy for minorities.

He warned against using the term "racist" too freely. "It is too often used as a cliché to beat everyone who disagrees with us."

Row as I.e.a. demands dead teacher's pay

by Richard Garner

Repayment of a month's holiday pay, which a teacher received before she died during the summer, has been demanded by a local education authority.

Solicitors acting for 59-year-old Mrs Barbara Pickles, a teacher at Wellington girls' secondary school for 30 years, who died on August 4, have been asked by Trafford education officials to return £523 paid to her for the summer holiday period.

Her daughter has now done this. However, teacher leaders believe Mrs Pickles should have been entitled to the money and are challenging the decision. Mrs Pickles, in common with all other Trafford teachers, received two months' salary on July 15 for the holiday period.

Mr Arthur Crosby, secretary of the local branch of the National Union of Teachers, said: "First of all, she should be entitled to keep the money under our conditions of service agreement. If you work for a full term then you get a third of the year's salary."

"In our view, she was quite clearly entitled to the holiday and has been basically wrongly treated. Her daughter was obviously quite upset at the time because her mother had died and she couldn't believe the authority had sent the bill." He said legal experts were now studying the case.

Mr Norman Barrett, conservative chairman of Trafford's finance committee, said that the authority had only done what had been demanded of it by law and "what would have been done by any other local authority".

"At the same time as we asked for the £523 back we paid death benefit of £10,000," he added. "At the time of someone's death, there is always money due and money owing and this was so in this case."

Warning on blacks' role in unions

Black teachers are likely to turn their backs on the recognized teachers' unions and form their own separate organizations unless more is done to encourage them to take an active part in union affairs, a teachers' leader says today.

Mr John Bowdler, chairman of the National Union of Teachers' working party on multi-ethnic education, writing in the union's *Secondary Education Journal*, which is published today, says: "Whilst few, if any, could deny that the NUT's record in the matter of race or multi-cultural education is considerably superior to that of any other organization, it must be admitted that in many parts of the country practice falls far short of the ideals expressed in NUT publications."

"This must be a matter of real concern to all levels of NUT leadership, for there is growing evidence of disenchantment amongst ethnic minority members."

He added: "Black teachers are not applying for promoted posts because they feel they will not succeed, and wish to spare themselves the pain of failure and rebuff."

"The same is true of union office at all levels. Nominations are not forthcoming because it is felt that, in toppling rejection, rejection is a non-option. It is preferable to non-election."

"If something positive is not done quickly, the NUT will be rejected and separate black teacher organizations will be formed. Indeed, this is already happening in some parts of the country and to me this is a matter of great regret."

Mr Bowdler suggests local branches of the NUT should co-opt teachers from ethnic minority groups to serve on union advisory committees.

A new umbrella organization, the National Convention of Black Teachers, was set up in London earlier this year with the aim of fighting discrimination. It will hold its first policy conference on December 12.

Biddy Passmore and Hilary Wilce on Manchester's sixth form problems

Spurley Hey battle looks lost DES decision may stop other l.e.a.s

Spurley Hey High School hit the headlines three years ago when Dr Rhodes Boyson, then a backbencher, looked at its A level results and called it "the worst school in Manchester".

The head, Mr Jack Schofield, hit back vigorously. The results were unsatisfactory, he agreed. But it was hard to achieve more than a handful of passes, when only a handful of pupils took A level exams. And, anyway, a school should be judged on far more than bald examination statistics.

Spurley Hey's A level passes are still not good. The odds are against it.

The school, housed partly in a 1930s one-time elementary school, and spread over two campuses a mile apart, serves a uniformly working-class area of council estates.

A quarter of its pupils have parents who are unemployed. Many of them come from single-parent families, and few can see that there is much to be gained from staying on beyond 16.



Jack Schofield, head of Spurley Hey High School, says the school is "upset by Minister's decision".

In a city where rolls are falling dramatically, Spurley Hey has managed to attract full numbers over the past few years. But only 45 of its almost 1,250 pupils are sixth formers, and relatively few are taking A levels. Most stay on to take or retake O level and CSEs, or the GCE. Last year the school had eight A level passes.

Mr Schofield is deeply disappointed by the Minister's decision. "We fall far short of what it would be desirable to offer by way of post-16 education. We simply can't offer the variety of courses."

Running a successful sixth form with such small numbers is a lost battle. Classes can be of one, two or three. "There is nothing worse than a tête-à-tête for eight periods a week with just one pupil. It is a constant struggle to build up their confidence, to give them something to aim at."

About 10 A level subjects are being taken this year, "but we can't begin to provide the range of sub-A level courses that should be available."

"Our pupils tend to see the sixth form as an antechamber to employment. If the chance of a job comes up, they leave. It's not uncommon to lose pupils the day before they are due to take A levels in May."

Sixth form colleges were the best way of developing all the potential now being lost, he is sure. Not only could they offer a wide range of courses, but they could provide a much more acceptable post-16 activity for working class youngsters than staying on at school.

He would like to see the city go ahead with a compromise: providing a sixth form college system, but excluding the three schools named by the Secretary of State.

"The most desperate need of the city is for an end to the uncertainty. We're lost. Now let's see what we can retrieve from the situation."

Sir Keith Joseph's decision to reject Manchester's plan for replacing sixth forms with sixth form colleges is likely to stop other councils' plans in their tracks.

Schemes with a mixture of 11-16 and 11-18 schools were repeatedly turned down by Mrs Shirley Williams, Education Secretary in the last Labour Government.

These schemes - sometimes called "mushrooms" because the sixth form of the 11-18 school can expand to cover sixth form provision for neighbouring 11-16 schools - have been considered unfair on the proposed 11-16 schools, a backdoor way of perpetuating the grammar school/secondary modern split. Labour councils are unlikely to propose them.

Yet the implication of the Education Secretary's decision last week is that mixed schemes are preferable to removing sixth forms from "schools of proven quality".

Since the areas most advanced with 16-19 reorganization plans are Labour-controlled city areas, this means that all progress may stop.

The letter to Manchester education authority stated: "The Secretary of State believes that only in very exceptional circumstances can it be right to reduce the age range from 11-18 to 11-16 of secondary schools of proven quality which continue to demonstrate their success in the provision they make for sixth form education."

He was particularly concerned at the effect the city's proposals would have on the Burnage, Parrs Wood and Whalley Range High Schools, it continued. And any new proposals should also state how single sex education was to be provided up to the age of 19 for those whose parents wanted it on religious grounds.

The decision also shows how circumscribed are the powers to change a reorganization scheme once it has been published and sent to the Secretary of State.

It is said that Sir Keith would have been willing to approve the scheme if he could have modified it to exclude the three schools with flourishing sixth forms. But the DES lawyers advised him that excluding more than one school was probably as far as he could go without risking a challenge in the courts.

Manchester, in its turn, has been advised by lawyers that the authority

11-18 SCHOOLS: SIXTH FORM PROVISION					
school	Total 6th Sept. 1980	A level subjects	A level groups: under 6 pupils	A level entries all subjects	6th form staffing ratio
north area					
Abraham Moss*	70	8	8	19	7.5
Harpurhey Girls	48	6	6	23	8.8
High School of Art	48	11	6	30	8.4
Newton Brook Boys	72	11	4	83	7.3
N. Manchester Girls	63	11	4	42	8.3
Plant Hill	14	4	4	7	7.1
central area					
Britley	21	3	3	9	8.3
Central Boys	81	11	8	55	8.8
Central Girls	91	11	5	79	9.1
Dukin	35	6	4	24	10.0
St. Nicholas Ardwick	38	6	6	15	11.1
Spurley Hey	39	9	8	34	8.2
Wright Robinson	95	16	10	75	7.8
south area					
Burnage Boys	147	18	9	180	9.2
Chorlton	90	17	12	82	10.7
Leverhulme Girls	128	17	12	75	7.9
Parrs Wood	257	20	7	312	11.0
Whalley Range Girls	195	17	8	139	10.9
Wilbraham	99	12	5	75	12.1
Wythenshawe area					
Brookway	98	12	6	78	8.9
Newall Green	23	10	9	38	8.5
Poundswick	104	9	4	52	9.3
South Manchester	22	4	4	7	3.8
Yew Tree	32	10	10	25	11.1
TOTAL (25 schools)	1,890	253	163	1,537	

*Abraham Moss School is a constituent element of the Abraham Moss Centre. Sixth form and other provision is undertaken in the Centre's FE college.

can simply resubmit a sixth form college plan, with the modifications hinted at by the Education Secretary. All due processes of publication and consultation would have to be gone through again, from scratch.

In any case, it would be hard to find a mixed scheme that would meet with the approval of the Labour-controlled Education Committee, the teacher unions and the pro-sixth form lobby.

Manchester councillors seemed this week to have lost heart over the

rejection of their scheme, which taken two years of hard work and local elections coming up next year, and the possibility of a heavy Labour council, they have abandoned hope of any kind of reorganization before September 1983.

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In addition, the school has no caretaker and so one extra duty Mr Buckingham has to perform is to lock up the school every night. This, he estimates, takes him 20 minutes a day or - more dramatically - 1,000 hours over 15 years or a whole term's teaching.

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BBC Schools Broadcasting Council alters programming.

Night-time radio for secondaries

A decision to broadcast some secondary school radio series at night was taken this week by the BBC Schools Broadcasting Council and brings once again into focus the question of the identity of educational broadcasting in the light of technological developments and the pressure for air-time.

The SBC's decision, which it is expected will be ratified by the Board of Governors next month, follows long talks over a document by David Matthews, manager of BBC Special Projects, which concluded that it was technically feasible for secondary schools to tape broadcasts at night for daytime transmission. His conclusions are based on a study involving 100 schools.

Virtually all secondary schools have audio recorders and some have the timing devices needed to stop and start recordings.

From 1983 40 minutes of secondary radio programmes will be broadcast at night, but the council emphasizes that a lot of consideration must be given to "safeguards", that is to publicity and guidance about the schemes, a study of the reliability of timing devices and back-up services like repeat broadcasts and the availability of cassettes.

The night broadcasts move has resulted mainly from pressure by the BBC Radio 4 directorate to retrieve precious VHF airspace for general broadcasts.

At present schools programmes go out on Radio 4 VHF and at certain times of the day listeners to general programmes have to retune to medium or long wave (depending on where they live) which has worse reception. Three years ago Aubrey Singer, head of BBC Radio, suggested that some schools radio programmes should go out at night - a recommendation which was roundly criticized by educationists and broadcasters.

Mr Singer's paper to the council is thought to have argued strongly that taking out 40 minutes of schools programmes will enable Radio 4 general listeners to retune at regular times rather than haphazardly as at present.

The fact that most schools record radio programmes for replay has been accepted by the broadcasters who have gradually adapted their output to cater for it.

The proportion of radiovision programmes, which rely on recording, has risen this year and all secondary English radio programmes are broadcast in blocks at the beginning of term for convenience. A new

radio series on microelectronics has been at intervals to signal the teacher to stop and discuss the arguments.

The same is true of schools television, 90 per cent of secondary schools have video recorders, and many series are produced in such a way that they can be split up.

In the light of the technological developments and the broadcasters' response the question will be asked: how long can educational broadcasting - both television and radio - hold out against pressures for air-space from other sources? Ironically, technological developments such as video, and audio recorders may have made schools particularly vulnerable in the scramble for airtime.

Donald Gratton, head of BBC Schools, is known to fear that similar proposals as those now being applied to radio will one day be put forward for schools television. Some heads of ITV companies, within which there



Mr Aubrey Singer



Mr Donald Gratton

is increasing commercial competition for the time now used by television, have hinted at the possibility.

Donald Gratton argues that airwaves are still the cheapest way of reaching schools. He is in favour of "mixed economy" with educational broadcasts transmitted on television, radio and cassette, with the latter being used for the most expensive duplication.

There are many alternative means of night-time broadcasting, such as present broadcasting policy, tapes distributed by the BBC or others acting on their behalf, and broadcasting gives teachers a flexibility in the use and timing of programmes and also the rationalization of the use of equipment.

Carolyn O'Grady

Association of Metropolitan Authorities' annual education conference, Oldham. Sarah Bayliss reports

Beware 'Mutt and Jeff' tactics on higher education body, MP advises

Local authorities should boycott talks with the Government about public sector higher education as a protest over the far-reaching proposals for curbing local government finance, said Mr Phillip Whitehead, MP, in a challenging speech to the conference.

"The participation of the AMA in these talks ought to be conditional upon the withdrawal of the other proposals affecting the future of local government in this country," he said.

The proposals by Mr Michael Heseltine, the Environment Secretary, which would make the levy of a supplementary rate subject to a referendum, struck at the very heart of local government.

Turning to the proposals for a new national body to oversee polytechnics and colleges, Mr Whitehead, Labour's spokesman on higher education, said the Government had adopted the "Mutt and Jeff" hard-soft approach used in American integration.

The first interrogation had shocked the local authorities. It was "a knuckle sandwich" in the form of a Whitehall plan - known as Plan B - to take over local authority powers.

But the second interrogation was "nice Jeff". Mr William Waldegrave - who seemed prepared to drop Plan B and to negotiate.

However, the local authorities should be on their guard. If talks with "nice Jeff" broke down then Plan B might be resurrected.

The "interim" proposals agreed so far were for a three-tier body with an advisory structure, a board and a main committee which ought to be in operation by next year for the administration of the public sector "pool" of finance.

Mr Whitehead wanted to know what local representation there would be on the new body and whether elected members would be involved as well as officers. It was not yet clear at what level decisions would be taken at or whether local councils would have an effective sanction on the main committee.

Mr Whitehead feared that the new body would be unable to look the University Grants Committee "in the eye". He believed it should run "parallel" to the UGC.

An independent chairman was also vital. Otherwise the person most likely to take the chair was Mr Waldegrave and that would not benefit the local authority side.

He repeated that the Government's search for a solution gave the local authorities a "measure of power" which they should use as a bargaining point to get Mr Heseltine's proposals altered.

Mr Phillip Briers, chairman of the education committee in St Helens, spoke out against disrupting the national body talks.

"It's a bit late to talk about cold feet when the interim arrangements are already settled," he said. "If we withdraw now the Government will say we can't take hard decisions. They will dust off Plan B and resurrect it."

Mr Whitehead replied that the Local Government Finance Bill would effectively deny local councillors, who cared about local institutions, the power to raise the money from rates to pay for them.

Mr Maurice Venn, chairman of the standing conference of regional advisory councils, said all advanced further education should be subject to a national review. As a Conservative

he accepted there must be a reduction in expenditure. In higher education and he warned the local authorities that they must be prepared to take hard decisions on particular institutions.

"Spreading the misery evenly across the system is the weakest kind of management decision," he said.

The local authorities had two years in which to make the interim proposals work. In spite of talks with Government they could still "wind up" with a select sector of institutions run from Whitehall. Nor should they be persuaded to settle for a "pseudo" UGC.

The local education authorities must "grasp the nettle" and negotiate with the Government about the future administration of polytechnics and colleges, said Mrs Nicky Harrison, chairman of the AMA education committee, in her closing address.

Mrs Harrison said she was "too long in the tooth" to fling down a gauntlet to Government and refuse to negotiate, as Mr Whitehead had suggested.

"We shall have to try to work seriously with the Government remembering that we are laying a pattern which may extend into the future, irrespective of changes on the local or central government scene."

Turning to the other controversial issue of the conference, Mrs Harrison said she was "more and more worried" that local authorities were being ignored in the Government's plans for the 16 to 19s. Councils already had the powers and duties to provide education and training and "they must be given the authority and resources to do the job locally."

School to Work P10

Mandatory award 'anomalies'

Motions approved by the mainly Labour conference called for the following:

□ That the system of mandatory and discretionary awards be abolished.

Mrs Doris Birdall, chairman of Bradford's education committee, said the volume of discretionary awards at advanced level meant there was little or no funding left for low courses in further education. She met students with places at Bradford College who feared they would not get grants.

Later Mr Richard Knight, Bradford's chief education officer, said the funds for discretionary awards had been cut by the beginning of this year. The increased demand from adults as well as teenagers was a severe strain on the Government's present policy of cutting back teacher numbers.

"To keep the teaching profession alive we need a constant good quality staff," said Mr Knight. "And yet good teachers are not opting to teach these days because the prospects were so bleak."

□ That the Government should revise its plans for reducing the teaching force by 8 per cent by 1982 and 1983.

□ That Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, should instruct the Home Office to continue to provide funding for the provision of education and training for resettlement in schools of refugee and other children.

□ That there should be a new language and although the Education Secretary to the powers under Section 12 of the Education Act which deals with school closures.

Proposing the motion Mr Conquest chairman of Manchester education committee said that authority had waited 10 months for a decision on re-organizing the schools. Authorities wanted one on the pros and cons of re-organizing schools.

Parents seek exam boost for Asian languages

By Diane Spencer

Asian parents want their children to learn their mother tongue to learn the history of Britain for the better. The report published this week by the Leicester Council for Community Relations.

Out of a sample of 312 Gujarati and Punjabi-speaking parents in Leicester, 95 per cent thought it important for their children to know an Asian language and 60 per cent said they wanted them to take it in O level.

Only two per cent of the children in the survey learned English as a first language and although the majority could speak their mother tongue only 18 per cent could read and write it. But 79 per cent could read and write English.

Most parents knew some English and more than half being able to read and write it.

Only one tongue was used in 92 per cent of homes with 74 per cent mostly using Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. Asian languages were more popular than those in English, says the report.

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Polls war of independents

Biddy Passmore joins Shirley Williams on the Crosby hustings

90 assisted places a year.

"If they withdrew charitable status, we could just manage", Mrs Margaret Davies, headmistress of Merchant Taylors' girls' school, said. "But the withdrawal of the assisted places scheme would hurt much more - it would hurt the parents."

Mr David Johnston-Jones, headmaster of the nearby boys' school, agrees. "We're delighted to have the assisted places", he said this week. "It's a move back to what we were founded for in 1620: to provide poorer children with a good grammar school education. Abolition of the scheme would be most undesirable unless it were replaced by another, more all-embracing scheme."

Both of the Merchant Taylors' schools are taking a big risk with the scheme. In spite of their name, they have only loose links with the Merchant Taylors' Company and few endowment funds to fall back on. They have told the parents of assisted place holders that abolition of the scheme would mean that their children would have to leave.

At St Mary's College, however, a reserve fund of more than £900,000 has been raised to cover that risk, chiefly through the campaigning of Mr Francis Crowley, a local parent and leader of the independent schools lobby. This week Brother Noel O'Halloran, the principal, was confident the fund would pass £1m.

One SDP spokesman doubted, however, that outright abolition of the scheme would become party policy because the scheme is a vote-winner - and it is noticeable that even Mrs Williams has restricted herself to saying she is "opposed" to it.

The fate of these three schools, with half a dozen smaller private

schools in the area, is said to affect 8,000 Crosby constituents directly - to say nothing of the chairmen of the local Liberal and SDP parties, both ex-pupils. But how much do candidates find education worrying local residents, as they rush from doorstep to doorstep?

At the Tory Party HQ, education is thought to be well down the list of voters' priorities. In a recent constituency survey, it came fifth in the issues considered most important, although joint third with rates in a list of the issues thought to be dominating the campaign.

Mr Peter Kilsen, local Labour Party agent, thought education important - but not the private schools issue. "That may be interesting news but it's not an issue", he said. "We have nothing to discuss." The candidate, John Backhouse, a 38 year old local teacher, was much more concerned with the state of education within Tory-controlled Sefton I.e.a., he said.

"Sefton is bottom of every league table it should be top of and top of every league table it should be bottom of", he added. "At every opportunity, the council cuts everything and more that the Government asks. They cut with enthusiasm; elsewhere, even Tories cut with a heavy heart."

Mrs Williams says education is discussed most in the prosperous northern part of the constituency, where there are two questions on private education for every one on state schools. In the eastern district of Maghull, however, where a large comprehensive faces closure, questions deal with state education.

During a hectic half hour's canvassing in Crosby on Monday night, the subject of education did not arise - although it was difficult to keep up with Mrs Williams, as she stood down the street. But a Party canvasser said she had had two questions about the assisted places scheme from council tenants that very afternoon.



Later, at an education meeting for 400 teachers, parents and governors, Mrs Williams spent out SDP policy, deftly fielding the few hostile questions. On private education, she said: "I resent very much the way educational issues have been narrowed down to this single issue."

Across the way at St Mary's College, Lord Beloff, former principal of University College, Buckingham, was pouring cold water on Mrs Williams' credibility. "Quite frankly, I would not pay much attention to what Mrs Williams says now", he said. "It is more important to know her actual views either expressed in

lectures and in action when she was at the DES or in writings and speeches before she knew her political fortunes would depend on the elections of Crosby." Her hatred of independent schooling was not something in the remote past, he added.

It is hard to judge how much weight the voters of Crosby will give to Mrs Williams' past and present policies on private schools when they go to the polls next Thursday. But everyone seems to agree they will give it more weight than they would almost anywhere else.

They also agree that, mountain or molehill, she looks like scrambling over it to victory.

Ready to read - helping hands take off the kid gloves

schemes such as VRH benefit both give and those who receive.

Certainly, the volunteers and the five London primary heads I talked to, agreed about benefits.

The volunteers go into schools for two sessions a week, mostly in pairs or threes to give each other courage. They work with individual children, two 30-minute sessions with each of their three or four children a week. "We don't just give them easy

numbers - they can get quite difficult children," said Mr George Keys, head of Dog Kennel Hill Junior School, Southwark, which takes a typical inner London mix of children.

Mr Keys said the volunteers had scored one or two notable successes - "done by patient endeavour, not in a flash".

All the heads agreed that many children had greatly improved in both their concentration and their attitude to reading.

The scheme was started by Mrs Susan Belgrave, a redoubtable lady in the old tradition of voluntary work. "Starting it needed somebody a bit persistent - and that's me", she says. Eight years ago she started knocking at ILEA's door with her scheme, and finally got them to arrange meetings and give it cautious blessing.

Now it is a registered charity with a tiny office contributed by ILEA in its Primary Language Centre, and funds from other charities. Volunteers are given a short training, with three sessions by Mr John Welsh, ILEA's staff inspector for English, a senior remedial teacher, and Mrs Belgrave.

The volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds - occupations of the 40 now in training include: a nurse, secretary, college students, teachers, civil servants, people in catering, a worker at Victoria coach station, a theatre attendant, a photo-copy operator and a diplomat's wife.

Virginia Makins

Price fears over attitudes to 'dim' and 'clever'

Centralists in Whitehall imagine an education system in which schools and the universities are responsible for "clever" children and where the Manpower Services Commission has responsibility for what they call "dim" children, said Mr Christopher Price MP in an after dinner speech.

Mr Price, chairman of the House of Commons select committee on education, said he was "terrified" by the approach. Nor were such centralists confined to the Conservative party. "We in the Labour party have a number of folk who would like to see a centralized

system succeed."

Referring to the legislation being proposed for local government finance, Mr Price said he would be opposing it, among the MPs "trying to ensure that England is never run from London."

Local government had been responsible for "everything decent" in education, particularly in England. For example, completely free grammar schools, free school meals and the tertiary college system. "All this is in danger of being stamped on by central government, by capitalist uniformity," he said.

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THE BETTER BRITAIN CAMPAIGN. A LITTLE HELP BEHIND THE SCENES.

This year, the Better Britain Campaign has been developed into the Better Britain Campaign.

The aim is to broaden its appeal - and make it that much more effective in changing the scenery of Britain for the better.

Shell is working in partnership with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Civic Trust, and now the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, to make young people more aware of their surroundings, and give them practical advice and assistance in mounting voluntary projects of their own.

It works in four stages.

1. Information. The campaign information pack gives you all kinds of ideas for environmental projects, like clearing ponds or patches of waste-ground, creating school nature areas or even restoring buildings. It also gives advice on getting (and keeping) a group together, choosing a site and getting permission to do the work from councils and landowners.

2. Advice. Voluntary projects can then be registered with the Better Britain Campaign, whereupon specialists will be available to give you the benefit of their experience in your kind of project. Or they'll know just the people who can.

3. Assistance. You may even be eligible for a grant. Details of projects which could qualify for grants are contained in the information pack.

4. Achievement Awards. By summer '82 projects registered with the campaign will be considered for special awards which recognise exceptional achievement.

So whether or not you have a project in mind, send for the campaign information pack today.

To: The Shell Better Britain Campaign, The Nature Conservancy Council, P.O. Box No. 6, Godwin House, George Street, Huntington, Cambridgeshire PE18 6SL. Please send me the Better Britain Campaign information pack.

Name _____
Organisation _____
Address _____

HELP TOWARDS A BETTER BRITAIN.



Star struck on reflection

Beyond the Milky Way: children from Corbets Tey special school, Upminster, Essex, join in a drama event staged by Havering Drama Team on the theme of space exploration.

Novel form war and peace

Pupils at an 11-16 comprehensive school in Gloucestershire are learning about war and peace in a novel way.

The first aim of the English Studies Department at Kingshill School in Cirencester, says the staff, is to remove the idea that war is noble and glorious and stress to pupils that conflict can be overcome by peaceful means.

During the third year at the school, pupils are encouraged to read a series of diaries, stories and letters showing the emotional effects of war and watch films, such as Joseph Losey's *For King and Country*, which indicates the physical and mental conditions of "life behind the lines".

Fourth and fifth year pupils study "war" as one of five different topics under the Joint Matriculation Board's "Integrated Humanities" studies syllabus.

The "war" course deals with events during the past 15 years, including the Vietnam war, the guerrilla wars and subsequent conflicts in Southern Africa, Northern Ireland and the spread of nuclear weapons.

Mr Graham Powell, head of the English studies department at the school, said: "What the course is not about is teaching children about where wars took place. It teaches them about conflict and hopefully takes the sting out of conflict on a day to day basis."

Courses

To obtain more information and/or a copy of the Guide for students and members, please write to:

aat The Secretary, Association
of Accounting Technicians,
21 Jockey's Fields, London, WC1R 4BN.

United States / Peter David

Bill deals new blow to Department

WASHINGTON: Another nail was driven into the coffin of the United States Department of Education last week when a Republican senator, Mr Dan Quayle of Indiana, introduced a congressional Bill which would distribute its major functions to other departments and agencies. Senator Quayle's Bill coincides with new negotiations within the administration aimed at deciding the fate of the two year old department. President Reagan has campaigned for its abolition, arguing that education should be a responsibility of the individual states and not the federal government.

In a statement introducing his Bill, Senator Quayle, a member of the senior house's budget and labour and human resources committee, argued that education was a function of the states but only a "concern" of the federal government.

He said the American people did not want to see more centralization

of the government and increasing power for "Washington bureaucrats and well-heeled lobbyists."

"During the past two decades we have witnessed an unprecedented erosion of power from local communities to Washington. This culminated in the creation of the cabinet-level department of education in 1979."

"It is most unfortunate that there are those more concerned about federal power, regulations, and further intrusions into our school systems than they are concerned about the quality of education."

Under the proposed Bill, the Carter administration's legislation setting up the department would be repealed and the major functions assumed by the department would be distributed to other government agencies.

Those programmes which did not fit into the activities of established departments would be transferred

into a small "education assistance agency." But the director of that agency would be prohibited from issuing any regulations "relating to the details of planning, developing, implementing, or evaluating programmes or projects by state or local educational agencies."

Student loans would become the responsibility of the treasury; handicapped programmes and libraries would be assigned to the health and human services department; foreign languages and international programmes to the State Department.

The only programmes left in the proposed education assistance agency would be the newly-established education block grant, elementary and secondary education programmes, and higher education which did not include student loans.

Senator Quayle said: "The concept of returning responsibility for the teaching of our children to the most local possible level of government is

part of the "new federalism" of which President Reagan has spoken, requiring a review of the changing role of the federal government and its relationship to the states, to local governments, and to our citizens.

"The story of the birth of the department of education is not glorious. It was a campaign promise made by Jimmy Carter to the National Education Association in return for the NEA's political support."

Although it seems certain that the department of education, like the department of energy, will cease to exist at cabinet level, Senator Quayle's Bill distributing most of its important functions to other agencies may be regarded as too hawkish for the Reagan administration.

Mr Terrell Bell, the Education Secretary, is thought to support the disbanding of the department but wants its major functions kept together in a non-governmental foundation or agency.

Australia / Bill Purvis

Girl's six-hour ordeal in box

SYDNEY: As a punishment for failing to do her homework eight-year-old Linda Lee was ordered by her teacher to sit in a big cardboard box for six hours.

Mr William Gunn, now the minister for Education in Queensland, has ordered a Brisbane school principal to turn the so-called "dunce-box", an old packing case about 5 ft high, open at both ends and with a window cut into one side.

The minister's order followed complaints by the mother of an eight-year-old pupil at the school, Linda Lee.

Linda's mother said a teacher at the Laidley Primary School about 50 kilometres from Brisbane had placed the box on top of her daughter's desk and chair so that she could still sit at her desk but could look out only through the window cut in the box.

She said Linda was put in the box because she had failed to do her homework.

"Linda became terrified being shut up in that ridiculous box," said Mrs Lee. "Her asthma flared up and she has had nightmares."

Mrs Lee added that her daughter was expected to transfer to another school.

College to open

A United World College is to open near Trieste, in Italy, next autumn. It will take 100 students, from 40 countries. Plans for colleges in the United States and Venezuela are also well advanced.

Israel / Benny Morris

Riots close most West Bank schools

JERUSALEM: Most West Bank schools closed down last week as pupils took to the streets in protest against the newly-introduced Israeli civilian administration and the closure by the Israeli military government of the area's main institution of higher education, Bir Zeit University.

The university was ordered to close by Major General Danny Matt, Israel Defence Forces coordinator of activities in the administered territories (de facto governor of the occupied areas) following three days of rioting by Bir Zeit students to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

In 1917 Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued the declaration which promised the Jewish people "nation-

al home in Palestine."

In the most serious incident so far, Israeli border policemen entered the Zahara Chris school in Jenin and shot a 15-year-old youth who allegedly brandished a knife.

The Israeli authorities claim that the youth and several companions entered the school earlier in order to incite the girls to riot. A border police officer was slightly wounded when a rock thrown from the school premises smashed the windscreen of his jeep.

The authorities have arrested dozens of high school pupils and university students around the West Bank, after stone-throwing and tyre burning demonstrations in Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Kalkiya, Hebron and in smaller Arab settlements.

The riots were accompanied by a commercial and municipal strike. Many of the West Bankers oppose the introduction of the civilian administration headed by Hebrew university professor of middle east studies Menahem Nisim, because they see it as a fig leaf for the continued military presence, and because they fear it is designed to lead to the introduction of the "autonomy" scheme in the Palestinian territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

The Palestinians oppose the autonomy scheme, anchored in the 1978 Camp David agreements between Israel, Egypt and the United States because they believe it will serve as a substitute and foil for their own preference - full Palestinian statehood and self determination in the territories.

Building bridges between classroom and work

Alan McGregor reports from the IBE conference

tion systems are remote from reality "and not meeting either individual needs or social objectives" have become a global phenomenon.

Amazingly, some schools are the answers indicate, still so "bookish" and inflexible that even a handicrafts period is a fundamental break with tradition. At the conference of "social ly useful productive work" in which children participate in any type of adult work and early on acquire skills that, it is hoped, may subsequently be raised to higher levels. But other countries, mindful of a variety of contemporary instances of exploitation of child labour, are against involving children in directly productive activities.

Generally in the Third World, where even very young children still play their part in the daily activities of the - especially rural - community, attempts are being made to divert them from "educationally unproductive" tasks while making formal schooling more relevant. In industrialized nations - still according to replies to the bureau's questions - the emphasis is on developing psychomotor capacities, furthering skills for creative activities "and teaching concepts which cannot be conveyed by textbooks: accuracy, quality and the properties of materials among them."

Further on, because of industry's higher requirements, there is a trend towards schools taking over responsibility for a first year of initial instruction previously undertaken by enterprises or in part-time courses. Work experience is a condition for entry to higher education in Tanzania and the German Democratic Republic, while

Sweden is evaluating the results of allowing academic credits for this. Some countries mentioned trade union opposition to involving school children in real work experience; another common obstacle is the contention by teachers, parents and employers "that schools should stick to doing what they are competent to do and not venture into productive work."

The conference's other main theme is the need for greater emphasis in general education on global needs and world problems. Again on the basis of answers to a questionnaire, there is universal recognition that the necessity of peace and international understanding must be impressed in every stage of education.

Many answers referred also to the necessity for reduction of socio-economic inequalities - related closely, the bureau says, to the process of democratization of education. Much attention is given to how the individual and society can keep pace with the "revolutionary" development of science and technology. While the conference is required to produce guidelines on what is "practicable and desirable", the question for many is what is attainable. In his opening address, Mr Amadou Mahtar M'bow, UNESCO Director General, said bleakly that statistics indicated improved school attendance were misleading in many developing countries.

If Third World education expenditure was rising, it still was averaging little more than 4 per cent of GNP, whereas almost nine-tenths of total world resources devoted to education were being applied in industrialized countries.

West Germany / Wellington

Strauss in political concession

BONN: The Bavarian state government led by Franz Josef Strauss unexpectedly given way to a demand that pupils be allowed to wear political campaign buttons to class.

At the end of October, Strauss' cabinet of conservatives approved a new school law draft that included the concession. It must now be approved by the state parliament.

The issue arose during the parliamentary election campaign in which Strauss, leading the Christian Democratic Union, attempted to oust the Federal Government led by Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt.

During the campaign, Friedrich Schanderl went to classes in Regensburg wearing a Social Democratic button bearing the legend "for Strauss". The school director expelled her for violating the general school regulations issued by the ministry for education and culture.

and which prohibited "political advertising" by word, print, picture or action" on school premises.

Fri Schanderl, already old enough to vote, took the case to the constitutional court, which declared the regulation under which she was expelled to be unconstitutional because it was not based on any law approved by the state parliament.

Cultural Affairs Minister Hans Meier reacted by proposing that parliament approve a school law incorporating verbatim the words of the ministry's regulations.

But unrest over Meier's proposal developed within Strauss' own party, leading to the state cabinet's collapse in October. The draft law submitted to the state parliament would prohibit campaigning in school.

However, pupils would be permitted to appear in their classes wearing political buttons and badges "marking that school order, school discipline and training mission, the right to personal honor or the teaching of tolerance is not thus endangered."

The decision rests with the school directors. Minister Meier told reporters that it is neither logical nor practical for the ministry to be switched in as the place of arbitration.

Pupils in other states had been allowed to wear political buttons in classes provided class work was not disturbed as a result. But teachers are forbidden to wear such buttons to class.

Coincidental, a labour court in Mainz ordered a local firm to make state a male employee dismissed a year ago because he, too, had worn a "Stop Strauss" button to work. His employer is contesting the decision.

France / Barbara Casassus

Rivalry delays university

PARIS: Corsica's first university for over 200 years was inaugurated at the end of last month against a background of technical delays and in spite of the fact that the Corsican people had been increasingly bitter in the six years since the institution's establishment was initiated under the Giscard regime.

Initially, (vice-chancellor) M Pascal Perrini and the rector of the Corsica Academy (leader of the local education authorities) M Pierre Ferrari, each vying for recognition as the driving force behind the scheme, developed into open battle. In a letter to the education minister M Alain Savary, the rector accused the president of the university, which "has been the victim of a conspiracy."

As well as condemning the "illegitimacy" of the president's nomination to the post and attempts to undermine his own authority, M Ferrari threatened to resign the course to be followed by the student.

The president emerged as victor in the battle; the minister replied to the rector by relieving him of his duties. Initially the university in the island town of Corte will award only a

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT 20.11.81

Richard Garner maps other countries' freedom to strike

Britain's teachers enjoy more rights than those in Europe

A survey of teachers' union rights in Europe has come to the conclusion that those who teach on the Continent enjoy fewer rights and freedoms than their counterparts in Britain. In several countries - not only Communist ones - teachers are forbidden to strike.

The survey, carried out for the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, includes this sombre warning, though: "The economic crisis and growing unemployment puts a strain on governments that can be reflected in labour policies. In such situations, trade union rights easily come to the fore."

In many European countries, teachers are considered to be civil servants and as such - are excluded from legislation giving employees the right to strike. Two countries, however, where they have won that right are France and Norway.

In France, the right of teachers to strike was won with legislation introduced at the end of the Second World War - largely in recognition of the part the French trade union movement played in the French resistance during the war.

It says the picture of teachers' rights over Europe as a whole is "nebulous", adding: "A common denominator in this picture is that where restrictions to trade union rights are maintained, it is with the consent of the specific character of the functions carried out in the public sector and the status of public employees."

Initially, in Norway, another country where teachers have the right to strike, it was conferred upon them in 1933 during the middle of an economic depression at a time when the government wanted to introduce pay cuts in the public sector.

In this connexion, the government had to give a guarantee that organizations in the public sector would get their right to conclude collective agreements on their salaries and working conditions in the future, it adds.

"It was in this instance a situation of severe economic restraint and the need for support from the unions which paved the way for these rights."

The report continues: "A dogmatic approach to the right of public employees to conclude collective agree-

ments, however, still prevails in a number of countries.

"In these countries, the organizations representing civil servants - as distinct from other public employees - have the right to negotiate but cannot conclude collective agreements."

"This is the case in Austria, Holland, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland. In these countries, civil servants do not have the right to strike either."

In Britain, it indicates: "British legal thinking has never made a distinction between trade union rights in the private and public sector. Thus, public employees have always had the right to take industrial action to the same extent as persons in the private sector."

Going on to discuss the restrictions, it says: "The constitutions of Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece all contain explicit mention of trade union rights and the right to strike. The legislation to regulate these rights further for the public sector has not yet been passed in Portugal and Spain."

In Greece, the legislation that further regulates trade union rights is so restricted that it is generally seen to be in violation of the constitutional provisions of trade union rights."

It adds: "A conclusion that can be drawn from the picture of trade union rights in Europe is that the extent to which trade union rights have been accorded is dependent on the political will in the individual country."

The multiplicity of solutions found concerning the exercise of trade union rights in the public sector shows that there are no imperatives inherent in the public sector that would be an obstacle to public employees enjoying such rights."

Denmark, for instance, is unique in preventing civil servants from taking strike action. Teachers in com-

SCHOOL CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

prehensive schools in that country consider themselves to be civil servants and therefore cannot strike. Elsewhere, teachers have taken advantage of a law which allows professional groups to declare themselves employed on a group contract basis which means they do have the right to strike.

The Danish Teachers' Union, Denmark's Laererforening, has been considering the possibility of changing the status of teachers in comprehensive schools from civil servants to a group contract.

In Austria, teachers are considered to be public employees appointed by the state with their employer laying down unilaterally their conditions of work. Wages, working hours, duties and rights are fixed by statute and teachers are appointed for life unless they commit a gross error or become incapable of work. They cannot be fired for any other reason.

Finland has three teachers' negotiating groups - one from each of the main trade union centres representing public servants - and they are allowed to discuss salaries and working conditions.

They have the right to strike and can be locked out of work but can be fined for taking place in an illegal strike. There is a strict pecking order through which a dispute must go through before strike action can be taken and this ends up with either the nationally appointed mediator or a regional mediator if all else fails.

Finland's teachers' unions believe the scope of their negotiating questions are too narrow. They also believe that having three negotiating groups is a weakness. A deal can be struck with two of them, leaving the third out on a limb and being forced to settle for the same agreement.

In Holland, the right to strike of public employees was prohibited in 1903 as a legal countermeasure to a political strike by railway workers. The paper adds: "As there does not exist a right to conclude collective agreements, the authorities will unilaterally decide if agreement cannot be reached in the negotiations. There thus does not exist a mediation system and public employees do not have the right to resort to industrial actions in order to press their demands."

They can, however, press for a "summary proceeding" when a district court judge can give a pro-

New Zealand/ Lindsay Hayes

Trainee intake is halved

WELLINGTON: Mr Merv Wellington, the Minister of Education, has halved the teacher trainees' intake for next year, much to the shock of educationists.

The overall quota for all divisions of the teaching service next year will be 1,662, compared to 3,300 this year. The Minister's decision was based on falling primary school rolls. The declining number of teacher resignations and what he says is a large number of former teachers from all sectors wanting to return to the service.

The Teachers' Colleges Association president, Mr Tom Fitzgibbon, says the decision "almost means the death-knell for teacher education". The 1,200-strong kindergarten teaching service which will have to get by with only 100 new trainees entering college next year, says that the Education Department's own figures project a future growth in kindergarten rolls.

The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association president, Ms Jean Pearson, says: "There must be a mistake. We don't appreciate the minister's joke and would he please announce the real figures."



Strike scenes like this at the William Tyndale school, London, in 1975, would have been illegal in many European countries.

visional judgment in cases which fall outside the scope of other courts.

In Malta, says the document, "teachers and other public employees have been under constant pressure from an autocratic regime."

It adds: "Two trade unions initiated legal proceedings against the government for unilaterally reducing public holidays and curtailing vacation leave entitlement of public employees. The court in December 1978 ruled the government's action ultra vires."

The government appealed and the Court of Appeal has postponed judgment on at least 15 occasions

over the past two years."

The report concludes with the case of teachers unions in Yugoslavia where teachers are given automatic job security, Yugoslavia have a system of self-management which means that all parties involved in the workplace and the school discuss their salary levels and then vote on them. There is, of course, no provision for strikes in the country's constitution.

The study on restrictions of teachers' trade union activities was prepared for the European Conference of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.

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EAL

Letters

Middle schools: years of progress sacrificed for cuts

Sir, - The article on middle school closures (November 6) was misleading. It caused considerable concern in Devon.

It is correct that middle schools in this county are under review, since all schools are reviewed regularly and phase work, subject-cover and curriculum of all schools are in the same way also under review.

At the end of the article you say that in Devon there are doubts about the viability of eight to twelve schools in Exeter and Tiverton. I had, I thought, made it clear to the person who telephoned that, yes, we do have eight to twelve and nine to thirteen schools in different parts of the county, but that concerning their future nothing at all has been proposed, debated or questioned by the J.C. OWEN,

Chief education officer,
County Hall,
Exeter, Devon.

Sir, - Your comment "Both ends v. the middle" (November 6) does not do justice to those who work in middle schools, nor to your memory of the Plowden report. It is no doubt true that in many areas, the additional logistical problem presented by the raising of the school leaving age during the period

when the abolition of selection at 11 plus and the establishment of comprehensive secondary education were being actively planned, was seen to be easily accommodated by the creation of a three tier system involving 8 to 12 or 9 to 13 middle schools. The facts and opinions presented by the Plowden committee were based, as I am quite sure you will now recall, upon sound educational reasoning and the conclusion reached in para 385 states: "But on nearly every count it seems to us that the balance of advantage is just with 12-year-old transfer."

For you to infer that the 8 to 12 schools are the product of a numbers game and that their closure (or do you mean reorganization into 8 to 11 junior schools by decapitation) need cause nothing but a few crocodile tears, is neither true, logical, nor honest, nor do you show any sign of having been inside one to investigate your hypothesis.

Those of us who have been involved in the establishment of either type can give many examples of quite radical changes in outlook from our 12- and 13-year-olds who, while embarking upon an introduction to subject specialisms, have retained so many of the attitudes which were highlighted in the Plowden report from their investigations into primary

schools. I entirely agree with that 9 to 13 schools started with enthusiasm for educational reasons but so too did the 8 to 12 schools and we still have that enthusiasm. The various boards of education of the same time of the "few educational reasons" for closing middle schools are advanced. Of course they are. There are none. It is one way of questioning financial expenditure. Both documents we have studied have vague but not necessarily flexible. Neither follow the general trend in the subject indicated by both Bullock and Aspects of Secondary Education. These recommended a wider variety of English skills, a broader involvement of all forms of learning in English teaching, and a greater emphasis upon continuous teacher assessment of work for examinations.

In spite of the arguments in favour of having a number of syllabuses, one of which would just be called "English", we believe the criteria have been so drawn up that most schools will opt for the separate "English" and "Literature" syllabuses, which in spite of the increased cost and element, look very like those traditionally associated with Mode 1 and 2. This will continue to retard progress in the way the subject is taught throughout a child's school career.

We would therefore ask that the 80 per cent of English departments in the country who have not filled in and returned the questionnaire do so immediately, whatever their views (leading out such a questionnaire would seem to be the equivalent of a Royal Commission - the results will be so varied and inconclusive that the instigators will push through what they want or just ignore the results).

Finally, we would also ask that you hurry through an exam that will determine to a very large extent the way in which English is taught over the next 20 - 30 years, the examination boards should submit their final syllabuses to teachers for their reactions and comments before they are irrevocably put into operation.

Why didn't your review go more about the outstanding needs of the work and the book? Yours faithfully,
JOHN MANN,
Secretary,
Schools Council,
160 Great Poland Street,
London W1.

Emotive terms

Sir, - What continues to astound and appal me as a parent and educationalist is the lack of objective debate on most educational issues of importance.

Ray Barr, Michael Hurdle and Benford (Letters, October 23) "Doubts on whether children were better seated in rows" all "don't believe it" in more emotive ways and contributed no job to our understanding of children learn and how that can affect teaching styles and classroom organization.

Our inability to discuss and evaluate options on educational objectives, teaching styles and classroom organization in partisan, emotive terms except in the most extreme of perhaps the biggest single hurdle to educational system has to be confidence in not being misled or ridiculed is the best way to the ideas of any kind into the open, and not objective appraisal can contribute, then I suggest that the beliefs of a little group of people at the least keep open an organization.

Confidence in not being misled or ridiculed is the best way to the ideas of any kind into the open, and not objective appraisal can contribute, then I suggest that the beliefs of a little group of people at the least keep open an organization.

Letters for publication should be short as possible and should be on one side of the paper only. The reserves the right to cut or omit any necessary.

16-plus plea

Sir, - As two English teachers with some 20 years experience between us, and as members of staff with much responsibility within a large school typical of most schools in the country, we wish through the medium of your pages to express our alarm and disquiet at the content and scope of the new 16-plus English examination which is being constructed.

So far English teachers have received only (a) a copy of the Joint CSE-OCE Council's Working Party Report, which we were asked to comment upon, and (b) a copy of the syllabus for drawing up the syllabuses of the examination, on which we were invited to fill in a questionnaire. This activity has taken place in the period of one term only. We believe that the various boards of education of the same time of the "few educational reasons" for closing middle schools are advanced. Of course they are. There are none. It is one way of questioning financial expenditure. Both documents we have studied have vague but not necessarily flexible. Neither follow the general trend in the subject indicated by both Bullock and Aspects of Secondary Education. These recommended a wider variety of English skills, a broader involvement of all forms of learning in English teaching, and a greater emphasis upon continuous teacher assessment of work for examinations.

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Finally, we would also ask that you hurry through an exam that will determine to a very large extent the way in which English is taught over the next 20 - 30 years, the examination boards should submit their final syllabuses to teachers for their reactions and comments before they are irrevocably put into operation.

Minority priority

Sir, - I am concerned that *The TES* chose to report a protest by the Schools Education Association that was both erroneous and misdirected. The visit of Lord Denning to open Seymour House at Bloxham School (November 6). I hope the role of the Schools Education Association will always be a matter for open debate, but that the *TES* is not willing to provide objective coverage, then educational achievement and press freedom count for little, and is cause for concern.

As an act of news piracy the SEA achieved a great success, but if *The TES* considers that 10 years of achievement and endeavour and a major occasion should be offset by a few hours of misdirected protest, and if *The TES* is not willing to provide objective coverage, then educational achievement and press freedom count for little, and is cause for concern.

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Literary studies and social stimulus

The logical extension of this view was graphically exposed to me by an "English teacher" who claimed that *Kes* (perhaps the classic text of "relevant" literature for schools) was as "significant" and "important" in English as *Macbeth*.

Similarly, his department possesses a "source file" on Zigger Zagger solely devoted to material on football hooliganism, urban violence etc. Nothing in the file mentioned or even acknowledged its literary worth; no attempt was made to "think critically" and "convey lucidly and coherently in writing" (University of London board) the value of the play. One is of course tempted to venture the opinion that such works have little literary merit apart from reflecting the "contemporary social and cultural life of our community". In this context it is perhaps unsurprising how unfashionable (and increasingly significant word in English teaching) such books as *Kes* and *Zigger Zagger* have become. Similarly Mr Heron seems to want to enslave English by linking it to other "disciplines" that encompass the ubiquitous "unliterary" medium and popular literature. Again the tendency is to detract from the word and its critical quality and significance.

However, what finally disturbs me about Mr Heron's view is the facility

with which he accuses so many English teachers of naivety, and by implication, stupidity. I do not believe that the University of London board or hardly any English teacher at A level believes that a syllabus "exclusively concerned with the past will automatically lead to a greater understanding of the present". The true purpose of an English teacher is to bridge that gap, it is that purpose that gives the job its reward. Similarly, he contrives to assimilate exactly what English teachers are trying to do when he confidently asserts (as if in possession of the Grail itself): "awareness that critical judgments are relative and not absolute seems to us an essential ingredient for education to be a multicultural society".

Such an awareness is at the very basis of literary study, it does not need the stimulus of a multicultural society. It is Mr Heron who is being "pedagogically naive" if he seriously believes that contemporary works by definition increase our awareness of our society, are not themselves imbued with "absolute critical judgments", or indeed to anything more to increase our knowledge and appreciation of literature at any level.

Similarly, Heron predictably insists that in order to understand the "community" recent works "must" be studied. Again the critical, literary quality of that work does not enter into the calculations. If the book has what are called "contemporary preoccupations" its value is undeniable.

Ultimately, Mr Heron's mission is to deprive A level literature of its crucial "literary" content and substitute a "general historical awareness" as an "essential ingredient for education in a multicultural society". This antipathy to literature even manages

more than they did a few years ago, and it is inevitable that schools feel the effect of this.

It is, however, a fact that there are 58 teachers on the staff here, of varying ages, nationality, and colour who are all coping very well. Twelve of them are women. One of the "senior teachers" who "comes in to discipline the boys" is in fact a lady not much older than Ms Veale.

G. B. CROWDER,
Headmaster,
South East London School,
Creek Road,
London SE8.

Sir, - We read with interest your brief articles on the experience and effects of stress in teachers (October 23), which made reference to the excellent research which is being carried out by Kyriacou, and others.

Our own research (Cox, 1977; Brockley, 1980) tends to support Kyriacou's findings, especially with reference to the percentage of teachers reporting severe stress, and in terms of the nature of the problems experienced by teachers. A number of cautions must, however, be borne in mind when assessing the available data; we mention three.

First, many studies in this area are based on comparisons between different teacher groups, and do not compare matched groups of teachers and non-teachers. While such studies can describe differential stress effects across the various teacher groups, it cannot place teachers relative to others. Our own research, and the available government mortality and morbidity statistics would suggest that teachers are relatively healthy in terms of physical illness, when compared with all other working groups. However, there is some suggestion that groups like teachers, who have continual close contact with and responsibility for other people, as the central feature of their work, suffer more from psychological disorders than others do.

Second, teachers are a particularly articulate group, who are therefore able to define and discuss their feelings and perceptions of work more easily than other working groups. They may as a result appear to be reporting more stress.

Third, there is growing evidence from a number of US and European studies that social support networks can act as buffers against the effects of stress. Our own work suggests that "job satisfactions" may similarly act as psychological buffers against work stress in teaching.

None of these caveats reduce the fact that many teachers experience significant problems associated with their work, nor do they weaken the case for further research into the alleviation of those problems. Two

particular avenues of progress are indicated from our comments; first, the deliberate development of formal and informal support groups within the teaching profession; the former perhaps through a work counselling system, and second, the enhancement of "job satisfaction" as a separate issue to reducing sources of dissatisfaction. Both social support and job satisfaction may act as effective buffers to the effects of teacher stress.

T. COX,
T. BROCKLEY,
The University of Nottingham,
University Park,
Nottingham.

O level concern

Sir, - The anxieties expressed by R. J. Montgomery (October 23) about O level in modern languages are real ones as every teacher knows. I should like to underline that the difficulties are not due, however, to some innate chauvinism or hostility to foreign language learning. The success of graded objectives schemes has shown this.

The first few candidates took tests in French and German associated

with the then existing two schemes in 1977. This year nearly 60 schemes are in operation in schools throughout the country and tests in several languages at various levels were taken by about 150,000 learners - that figure is roughly the same as the entry for O level French.

This remarkable development shows that where objectives are clearly defined, are appropriate to the learners and appear reasonable to them and the tests are criterion referenced, language learning in school can be pursued with enthusiasm and success at all levels of ability and achievement. It is essential that these characteristics form the basis of the new examination at 16 plus.

I would urge language teachers to involve themselves in the discussions on criteria that are to take place this autumn, to arrange meetings in their own departments and to attend those organized by local authorities and the language associations.

BRIAN PAGE,
Chairman,
National Committee for Graded Objectives in Modern Language Learning.



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Talkback

Structuralism: false claims? J. W. Dettner

Michael Peters's "The English Teacher and Structuralism" (TES October 2) communicates some very distorted ideas about the "older" criticism, and makes some unjustified claims for structuralist criticism.

Although he tips his hat to the "older" criticism by saying that there is still much of value in it, his hero is the "new" criticism. The "older" is tired, it only talks about "great" literature, it "simply restates the content of the text in other words" and it fails to challenge the ideologies that underpin texts.

In contrast, the Structuralism is acceptable because it is new (a ridiculous argument); it asks us to consider what we mean by literature; it does not simply restate the content of the text; it challenges the ideologies underpinning texts; and by challenging the ideologies it will help us get to the "real", underlying meanings.

My first objection is to Michael Peters's description of the "older" criticism. It is revealing that he associates it entirely with F. R. Leavis and Scrutiny. What happened to I. A. Richards and William Empson?

Even when his statements are applied to Leavis and Scrutiny they are not really appropriate. Leavis did not only write about what he saw as "great" literature, he also paid attention to other writing.

In *Culture and Environment* he analysed advertising and journalism and their underlying ideologies. Scrutiny concerned itself with all aspects of culture. In this context one cannot forget G. D. Leavis's *Fiction and the Reading Public* - a seminal work on light fiction and the reading habits of the English public. When Leavis did write about the

"great" writers he did not just assert, he tried to explain why he thought they were great, and it is in those explanations that he makes one consider what literature is. Neither did he ignore the ideologies underneath a work; he explored them explicitly and implicitly.

It may be that Michael Peters and the structuralists don't approve of Leavis's ideological conclusions, but to assert that Leavis ignored ideology is incorrect, and is to misread his writings.

Michael Peters, like so many structuralists, seems to believe that structuralism can get below the culturally determined conventions of literary thought because it can throw off any bias or ideology, and thus penetrate to the "real", underlying meanings. This is poppycock: words themselves contain cultural determinants; we are able to communicate only because we observe culturally determined conventions of verbal exchange.

Structuralism apparently is asking new questions about form; that is implied by Michael Peters's acceptance of the structuralist claim that the "older" critics "simply restate the content of the text in other words". But the "older" critics did not simply restate the content.

They, like anyone else who wants to discuss a text (and this includes the structuralists), cannot avoid attempting to restate the content if examination and analysis is to take place, for form is not something that can be examined apart from content, unless one is happy with merely noting the most basic things - for example, that the text is written in sentences.

Further, the idea that they alone delve beneath literary conventions is nonsense. What did Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* do? And that is just one example.

If structuralism has any common ground with the 'older' criticism why am I objecting? First, it makes false claims - that is, it is dishonest. Second, to obscure its dishonesty and to

appear utterly dispassionate and uninvolved in approach, it uses a jargonised mode of communication.

If it does take over English studies, that jargon will result in the isolation of professional English studies from what is left of the reading public. Further, its jargon obscures what is really being said about a text, and falsely can creep in.

Third, I resent its suggestion that it can be neutral and therefore can discover the "real" meaning of a text.

It is false, because it implies that all explicit statements are by definition trustworthy. It is false, arrogant because it suggests that alone can discover the "truth" about a text, and therefore totally misunderstands the processes of human thought and the nature of literature and literary criticism. May it be perfect being, he is not able to cover the total "truth", he can only hint and suggest.

In the same way, no critic can say everything about a text: as the structuralists would say, there is a plurality of meanings in any text - although that is not to say that anything goes. As some structuralists I know seem to think, Michael Peters suggests that the "older" critics have not been interested in this "real" meaning; but of course they have. That concept of the "real" echoes I. A. Richards's words about the "proper meaning". Let us turn to what an old and astute critic has to write about meaning in a text.

"Thus in all reading there are no things we may contrast. The meaning we find or give; and a proper meaning, or 'What the passage means' as we are apt to say. Proper Meaning, though it is what we aim at, is something we never hope to grasp... the proper Meaning... is a kind of spirit-ghost..."

J. W. Dettner is a recent graduate of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Disturbing power shift Peter Whittaker

The 16-plus is far more than an overhaul of the curriculum in an attempt to ensure the comparability of examinations. It is more than an educational divisiveness inherent in any dual system. It is an attempt to shift the balance of power, away from school, towards the exam boards, universities and, disturbingly, the politicians.

This situation has arisen out of a general disquiet over "standards" and after a most enlightened period in educational history has raised grave doubts over comparability of courses, fairness of moderation procedures, and the professionalism of teachers.

The Beloe Report (1960) marks the watershed. In introducing CSE it gave teachers and boards the opportunity to develop new courses. This partnership resulted in a tremendous improvement in course design, in assessment methodology and, arguably, in a richer experience for many pupils. Power shifted towards the teacher in the classroom.

If one assumes a constant view of power, any increase for both GCE boards and universities. The present review provides an opportunity for the balance to be redressed - especially when one realizes that the GCE boards dominate the 16-plus working parties.

This would be of little consequence if new arrangements were to improve educational provisions for the majority of pupils. But will this be the case? The southern group's early discussions, in the social sciences at least, suggests improvements in syllabus construction and assessing are to be ignored, and a heavy emphasis placed on external examinations for all pupils. There must then

be the intimate involvement of teachers, every step towards the system. In particular, teachers who have constructed courses and taught syllabuses should be consulted, and their wealth of experience tapped. A well-trained and knowledgeable profession, properly accountable to the public and in partnership with the universities and exam boards, presents a powerful adversary to politicians who seek to use education as a means of controlling the curriculum. Such a partnership should be encouraged, at the present difficult time, by an open, constructive atmosphere.

Peter Whittaker is head of school studies, Waverford Community School, Havant, Hampshire.

Courses

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Your first step to success begins when you pass your G.C.E. For promotion, or qualifying for Further Education or a Professional Course, you need your G.C.E. and you need it now. The Rapid Results College has been founded over 50 years ago, we have many thousands of students through their short, intensive, and highly effective 4-week courses. Not with dual textbooks, with clear, simple tuition from passionate teachers who guide you step-by-step through the subject, and help you to understand it. And the best of all, you can study at home, or in our modern, comfortable, and well-equipped facilities. Write immediately for FREE 24-page Prospectus or FREE 100-page Reading Courses Prospectus to:
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In the aftermath of the riots in Toxteth, Moss Side, and other centres of urban unrest it has become apparent that, despite the soul-searching, self-recrimination, and apportioning of blame, little in the way of major reform is likely to occur in the foreseeable future. Any thoughts to the contrary were well and truly squashed by Michael Heseltine's recent Merseyside package.

It is clear that if any positive change is to occur it will have to come from within the existing structure. While whole sections of this structure have been examined and found wanting - housing, job prospects, policing, to name a few - the role of inner city education has escaped scrutiny. Is this because the inner city schools are blameless, or because their contribution to the urban riots is not quite so obvious?

Although some of the youths involved in the riots were making a political statement, it seems clear that the vast majority of teenagers and pre-teens engaged in the disturbances, were motivated partly by an imitative impulse, and partly by the appeal of gratuitous violence and theft which could pass undetected. Members of the establishment have not been slow to criticize parents for neglecting their children, and for neglecting their role as agents of socialization. Such a view, however convenient it may be, is simplistic, and neglects the complexity of the issue in question.

While the primary responsibility for socialization rests, theoretically, with the parents, whether or not many inner city parents are capable of accepting that responsibility is a different matter. Given that many of these affected parents are struggling to keep their heads above a rising tide of unemployment and depressing living conditions, it is understandable, though not altogether excusable, that they should neglect some of their duties as agents of socialization.

Whether we like it or not, in many cases the prime responsibility for the socialization of many inner city children now rests with their schools. Recent events have shown that schools can no longer regard this as a secondary function. Although the content of the curriculum certainly warrants change, it is the form of inner city education, and the relationships between the schools and the areas they serve, that warrants immediate attention.

The reluctance to take on extra burdens is understandable. Teachers are confronted with a degree of stress that can be only partly apprehended by their colleagues working in other parts of the country. To add to existing burdens without increasing financial provision, instead of running it down as is happening at the moment, would be foolhardy. If the role of the school is to be expanded into that of a genuinely caring community institution, there has to be an infusion of staff and resources. Only a large increase in the educational budget allocated to inner city areas will make this possible.

Yet large infusions of cash and resources will not, in themselves, be sufficient to bring about any real change. The time has surely come to effect a radical change in the provision of community education within our inner cities.

In the past, lip service has been paid to community education. This has resulted in a patchy service. Seen as an extension of mainstream educational provision, rather than as a integral part of that service, community education has suffered in consequence. Those areas where commitment has been greatest have shied away within current limitations. But for the most part the term "community education" is a cosmetic, disguising an absence of any meaningful provision.

Not only is there a need for a more thorough policy of community education, but there is a need for that policy to be coordinated at national level, to ensure greater consistency of application in all inner city areas than has hitherto been the case. For those who doubt that there would be demand for an expansion of educational provision within inner city areas, one need look no further than the blossoming in recent years of holiday reading projects and numerous Saturday "classes" and clubs.

The whole idea of school as being something that starts at nine and ends at four needs to be examined, as does the use made of schools during holiday periods. There might be a case for increasing the numbers of teachers working in inner city areas and implementing a flexible system. This would mean that there would be teachers available to operate "night schools" and "holiday schools".

Attendance could be by enrolment, on a



features

Frank Flynn suggests that teachers in inner-city schools lack the insight and understanding needed to communicate effectively with parents

Street level credibility

terly basis for "night school" and a weekly or fortnightly basis for "holiday schools". The curriculum should strike a balance between academic and recreational pursuits, and provide children with the chance to pursue areas of interest in depth.

The success of the schemes outlined above, indeed of all educational schemes, depends to a large extent on the good will and support of parents. Some parents, for the reasons given earlier, find it difficult to become involved with the education of their children. However, there is reason to suppose that these form a minority. Why, therefore, have so few inner city parents taken a participatory role in the education of their children?

Recent evidence from reading schemes involving parents in Haringey and other areas would seem to indicate that, not only are large numbers of parents willing to take an active interest, but that when they are given the chance to participate the results are enormously beneficial to all concerned. Successful schemes involving parents have worked because a great deal of time and effort has been spent in communicating with parents; in giving them specific goals, and detailed instructions as to how they might best achieve those goals.

One of the main reasons why parents have not become more involved is the poor communication by schools. In a number of cases, the channels employed are more likely to alienate than to elicit a positive response. Is this accidental or deliberate? Do such institutions believe parents should be kept, as far as possible, outside the school gate?

Much has been said and written about the differences that exist between middle and working class codes of language. However, the

main focus of attention has usually been upon the child's language, and his or her use of that language in relation to the demands of the school. Considerably less attention has been paid to the language used by teachers, social workers, and educational psychologists in their dealings with parents.

Having grown up in an inner city working class environment is obviously not an essential prerequisite for an individual to do their job well in that environment, but it undoubtedly helps. Furthermore, the possibility needs to be faced that a number of people connected with education in our inner cities, and who need to communicate with parents if they are to do their job properly, fail to do so partly because they project the "wrong image", and partly because they lack the necessary insight, understanding and flexibility to shift linguistic codes sufficiently to find a point of contact with parents.

Not only should a high priority be attached to the establishment of a training programme in communication skills and image presentation, but the "successful products" of inner city education should be actively encouraged to return and work in inner city areas in teaching, and the caring professions generally. If, nothing else, such people would provide living proof that inner city children can make it through higher education, and at the end of that education can actually get a job. The positive gain in having people who are able to communicate and who have, at the same time, a street level credibility, would be enormous.

The majority of inner city schools are reluctant to provide compensatory education. Given the dubious value of some American schemes, with their inbuilt insensitivity to the

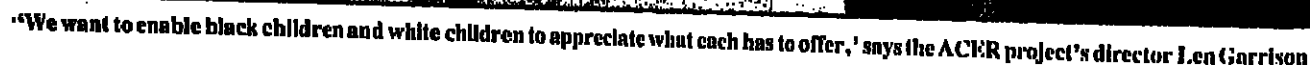
culture of the inner city populace, this reticence is understandable, if misguided, for it is a mistake to equate the concept of compensatory education merely with the British equivalent of a Headstart scheme.

It can be far reaching in its aims and embrace many of the programmes for community education mentioned earlier. The term "compensatory" does not have to be applied in a patronizing or devaluing way. But it would be ridiculous to claim that the great majority of children attending inner city schools are not, in some way or another, actively disadvantaged when compared with their peers in other parts of the country.

Problems of inadequate housing, crime, and an environment which, although not actively hostile, could not be termed benign, all combine to impair their progress. In short, the same problems that prevent many parents from taking an active interest in their child's education, also have an adverse effect upon the child's ability to make the most of his or her education.

The steady progress made in the fields of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural education in recent years has provided a platform on which a genuine compensatory education can be built, focusing heavily on study skills, high teacher expectation, and a massive infusion of skilled staff and quality resources. The summer riots need to be seen as a forceful plea for positive discrimination in favour of inner city areas. If that plea is ignored, society will not merely have placed those children at risk; it will have consigned their future to the dustbin.

Frank Flynn is deputy head of Victoria Primary School, Islington.



John Stephens is Staff Inspector for Music, ILEA. The views in this article are those of the author, and are not necessarily shared by the authority.

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A family of nations

Victoria Neumark on changing policies at the Commonwealth Institute

What is the Commonwealth – besides no longer a source of cheap butter? Sixty thousand people a year visit the Commonwealth Institute to find out.

The heart of the building and its activities are the Commonwealth Galleries, a reconstituted version of the old Imperial Institute in South Kensington. When the Queen opened the Institute in 1962 the winds of change were blowing swiftly through the British Commonwealth and turning it into a Commonwealth of nation states in equal partnership. Each of those nation states contributes its own exhibit to represent its culture in its setting. To these exhibits now flock schoolchildren in parties and with their families, overseas tourists and visiting Commonwealth members on research, on holiday and on speculation to pick up a bit of home.



El Molo child with crocodile, from an exhibition of photographs by Mohamed Amin on view until the end of the year.

Educationally, the Institute has much to offer. An extensive lending and reference library, with recordings and audio-visual material, is used by sixth formers and students. Worksheets, talks and space to eat packed lunches are available for school parties. The Institute itself tours "Caravan" and "Focus" presentations which at greater or lesser length explain the Commonwealth to the citizens of one of its members.

These directly educational sections of the Institute are jointly funded by leas and the MSC, or paid for by fees charged to leas, but the bulk of the Institute's £2 million budget is supplied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Whilst a Community Education Officer was appointed in 1979 and non-formal educational programmes have begun, as yet the link between immigration and empire has not been strongly stressed. The emphasis is on presenting the cultures of the Commonwealth to a wide public rather than to groups of that public who originated there.

Or at least that is the drift of most official policy. In fact, the advantageous terms offered to Commonwealth groups and the constant availability of space has meant that the Institute has often been used by all manner of ethnic minority groups, not just the establishment orientated committees who stage National Day celebrations and the current Young Artists of the Commonwealth exhibition. Policy is in flux too, so that as well as such highly acclaimed artists in the World Music series as the Japanese Okinawa Dance Group (26-27 November), there is also room for Afro-Caribbean music and a Gospel Christmas in December. 1982 will begin with a festival of black films, and be heavily booked with events connected with the Festival of India.

So the simple "rubbernecking" of many visits to the Galleries is being transmogrified by their new attitude to the Institute's role. Robert Atkins, in charge of the recently formed Arts Department, called it "a deeper, more structured response to the diversity of mankind". Last year's exhibition of Masks and this year's on the Art of Africa have tried, with varying success, to pay deep respect to other cultures whilst placing them in some relation to the British cultural experience. It is not just funny goliwogs in grass skirts out there, but members of civilisations.

September's exhibition on The Arts of Sri Lanka combined a scholarly display of the moving tranquility of Buddhist art with a zesty look at the crafts and gemstones of the

"pearl in the Indian Ocean". The largest star sapphire in the world was on view, guarded by a cobra.

Perhaps we don't want to lose all the wonder with which we regard foreign people and places. A little wonder is all to the good. Who can gaze on the snows of Canada or the savannahs of Africa, even painted on a backdrop to stuffed animals, without a lurch of amazement? The most successful activities at the Commonwealth Institute are either functional (school visits, the library) or else singularly combine the familiar and the unknown. In the Sufi Festival a lecturer involved volunteers in the chant which brings on mystical trance; Art from Africa suggested new dimensions to our appreciation of sculpture. The geography books and the altars of the fine arts can fuse and flower for the visitor to such an exhibition.

Internationalism, then, in a world which seems at times to be ever more rigidly aligned in military camps, is a welcome break in formality. That the Commonwealth Institute is visited by almost embarrassingly pro-British and vitriolically anti-British individuals is a tribute to that embracing informality. Within Britain, the newer policy of constantly encouraging not only, for example, Shirley Lin from Malaysia as Commonwealth Poetry Prize winner and Sam Hillary from Jamaica as Artist of Indian Dance, and organising a 1980 Children's Carnival with the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee, seems to prove that the interpretation of non-Western and Western culture can flow both ways.

Administering that flow does have problems. Joe Mydell, a black American artist and teacher recently was appointed director for the Music Theatre project, funded by Gulbenkian. The performances given this year were the culmination of six months' workshops exploring through dance and songs the movements of black people from Africa to the USA and UK. The aim was not merely to give a one-off performance, but also to train the young performers in theatre skills that might stand them in professional stead. However, problems with routing the cash through the Institute led to the last six weeks of rehearsal having no funding at all.

If the arts of the Third World were left to the whims of the market economy we would see only the worthy products of university departments or the fodder for instant commercial success. For those who want to retain the contact with a wider world which the Com-

monwealth signifies, the work of the Commonwealth Institute is invaluable. When could you hear the Musicians of Jajouka, Bauls of Bengal and see the giant Star of Sri Lanka at all, let alone alone under one roof? The India Festival of 1982, in which the Commonwealth is heavily involved, brings the attractions of the diversity of human culture more powerfully before the eye of general public. Meanwhile, those who want to enrich the "thoughtless eye of youth" with musings on "the still sad music of humanity" and maybe a capriccio or two as well, do not neglect what the Commonwealth Institute has to offer.

The Commonwealth Institute, Kensington Palace, London W8 (Tel: 01-602 3232) is open from 10.30 Monday to Saturday and 2-5.30 Sunday. Admission free.



Jamaica through the eyes of Raul Padilla, part of an exhibition on show throughout December.

Massacre of the not-so-innocents

By Geoffrey Parkinson

Let's Talk About Me. A Critical Examination of the New Psychotherapies. By Anthony W. Clare and Sally Thompson. BBC Publications £4.50, 0 563 178876.

When Dr Anthony Clare and Sally Thompson decided they wanted to study the styles and effectiveness of post-Freudian psychotherapy cults their investigations almost inevitably had to commence in America: either because of "emotional constipation" or the restraints of the National Health Service (or a blend of both) the British have never shown any great enthusiasm for the "talking treatments".

First port of call was the Californian home of Carl Rogers, genial founder of the Encounter Group movement. If Freud had pondered with deepening complexity and gloom over the nature and ultimate destiny of mankind, Rogers dramatically remoulded the pessimistic theories from Vienna with New World optimism, epigrammatic simplicity and democratic commitment. For him humanity is blessed with original virtue rather than doomed by original

sin. Not for Rogers the priesthood of psychoanalysis; each patient is regarded as his own best analyst. Nor for Rogers the cold interrogations of the head – humanity could only be helped by a creative outflowing from the heart.

Somewhat over-awed by the particular charm and the naive optimism of the patriarch, Clare and Thompson at first seemed to find themselves semi-paralysed; any criticism somehow appeared inappropriate, any critique the Rousseauesque claims for feelings over thought at last inspired them to throw a small spanner in the ideological works: "Rogers seemed surprised by the suggestion that the present state of social disarray might be due more to a lack of critical reflection than an excess of it."

Worse then follows: in what must have been a shrewd, swift cross-examination on modern treatment methods, poor old Carl is judged and found wanting: "he appeared totally ignorant of the work of the many social, biological and psychological researchers..." The reader is not told how the interview finally concluded:

a photograph of the Patriarch's undoubtedly bemused expression as he finally saw his taxing guests off the premises would probably have revealed all we needed to know. Certainly one has an uneasy suspicion that long before that moment arrived, Dr Clare and Sally Thompson had begun to scent that many great killings lay ahead of them: if Rogers could be flawed so easily what chance did the small time pundits of personality change stand against their interrogations?

And sure enough as chapter follows chapter we are invited to witness the massacre of innocents and no-so-innocents! Psycho-drama, sex therapy, the primal scream and a whole bundle of mind bending methods are smartly scrutinised and either scorned or scaled down. Dr Clare once somehow suspects is the principal assassin: a modern, secondary modern Voltaire, he demands evidence of therapeutic success, sharply discounts most claims to originality by cult founders and surgically disentangles brochure hopes from real life experience.

The end results will prove poor consolation to the mentally ill who've been living in hopes

of imported redemption from the good USA. Indeed it is difficult not to wish that somehow the conclusions of the book could not have been made before old Carl Rogers and Co. actually had their psycho-circuses; what a vast waste of time, money and misplaced hopes they have been.

But then a slight query arises. Did Doctor from the Maudsley Hospital and the lady producer from the BBC actually enough of the right questions. Yes of course we had to know the cold facts about the mind cure cults were really related to the field of religio-social evolution than the movement of mental illness.

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projects in London schools. The Half Moon Young People's Theatre took their play about race to the East End schools while the Royal Theatre Royal Stratford has based on a series of workshops with local professional actors from the theatre's current show into local schools at their request.

For Dembing's *Territories* dissects the familiar contemporary myths of the area by dealing mainly with anti-Semitism rather than with Asian prejudice, though this is a glaring omission. The play does not scruple to go into some of the more sordid details of the Jewish experience, but more bravely pursues several lines of argument to show up the irrationality of the myth. It is a worthy piece and book could not have been made before old Carl Rogers and Co. actually had their psycho-circuses; what a vast waste of time, money and misplaced hopes they have been.

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books

Technical hitch

The Beginnings of Brunel University. By James Topping. Oxford University Press, £20.00.

Dr James Topping was the last principal of Acton Technical College, the first and only principal of Brunel College of Advanced Technology, and the first vice-chancellor of Brunel University from 1966 to his retirement in 1971. He has written a solid and well-documented account of his stewardship, all of which adds up to a sturdy volume of university history. It would be an exaggeration to describe it as gripping stuff. It is written in what passes for committee prose and contains many extracts from official documents, also couched in less than seductive language. But the book has all the merits of its failings, also. It captures and records the detailed history of the origins and early growth of a new university, including a wealth of material which would otherwise soon have passed beyond recall.

Not least of its virtues is to be found in the introductory chapters which trace the development of technical education and higher technical education during the first 50 years of this century. It is a tale which has been told before, but anyone who wants a succinct guide to the recurring confusions of official thought on education in the applied arts and sciences leading up to the Percy Report of 1945, the various abortive attempts to create a Royal College of Technologists and the dreams of British versions of MIT and Delft, need look no farther than this.

Without an understanding of this background and the profound ambivalences which it betokens, it would be difficult to make sense of

the Brunel idea of a technological university and its continuing, and relatively successful, attempt to retain this identity. It was Lord Eustace Percy who added a note of reservation to his own report which included among others, the sentence: "A Government can have only one university policy at a time". It would be difficult to think of a more naive statement from a wiser man.

Dr Topping is copious with his information about the transition process but, not surprisingly, discreet about the really difficult problems which followed from the change of status and change of gear.

It has been the experience of all the ex-CATs that some of the staff carried over from old technical college days failed to measure up to the new university expectations, with lasting consequences in some departments.

Perhaps the best monument to Dr Topping's work is the fact that, 15 years on, Brunel remains committed to the sandwich principle for large numbers of students and has made great effort to continue to find work placements for students, notwithstanding the recession.

Now Brunel, with the other ex-CATs, bears the brunt of the cuts distributed by the University Grants Committee which (at any rate in the UGC's eyes) reflect weaknesses which are derived from their pre-history as colleges of further education, and is forced to look for new partners in adversity in the shape of the staff and students of Royal Holloway College. Perhaps the next historian of Brunel will have another transition to recount, with all its trauma, open and concealed.

Stuart Maclure

History man

History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper. Edited by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden. Duckworth £25.00.

This collection of essays "in honour of" is better than most similar collections. The person honoured has two contributions of his own: the one, his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor, and the other his valedictory lecture given 23 years later. Both are eminently scholarly and urbane, and it is impressive to see how they both simmer with the same vehement defence of history as a subject which must be accessible, open and free. It is striking to see too how they range over a wide purview of period and place.

Some of the essays fit in neatly to Trevor-Roper's main professional interests. As his first major study was on Archbishop Laud there is Kevin Sharpe's account of Laud's attempt to reform Oxford in the 1630s. As some of his more controversial contributions have been concerned with the English Revolution there is Blair Worden's study of republicanism and the Puritan Revolution. A passionate interest in Renaissance thought is reflected in an essay by the late Frances Yates, a constant preoccupation with religious ideas has its response in Fernand Braudel's discussion of the Reformation in France, and a realisation of the importance of social policies finds its response in Valerie Pearl's essay on early modern London.

But Trevor-Roper has always been an historian who is entertained by history as well as entertaining by means of history. He must therefore relish the bizarre negotiations between England and Spain in the 1640s as outlined by John Elliott, the beautifully written account of Thermidor by Richard Cobb, the continuing revelations about Joseph Chamberlain and the Jameson Raid as expounded by Robert Blake. And on the subject of entertainment the publisher will surely not object if the book-browser is reminded to turn to the final paragraph of Trevor-Roper's valedictory piece. He (or she) might decide that that alone is enough to justify the purchase of this distinguished volume.

Douglas Johnson

Lesser evil

Pen to Paper. By Alison Forbes. Edward Arnold £2.50. 7131 0494 5.

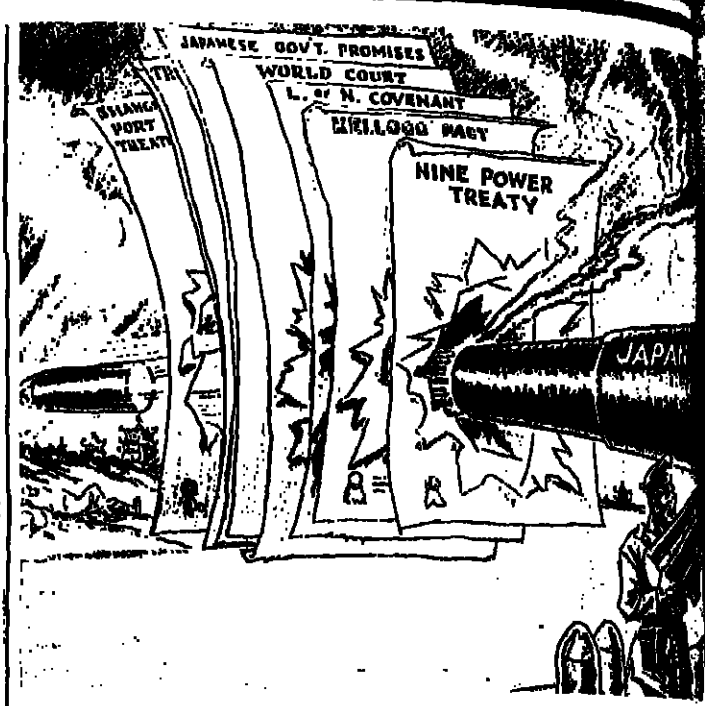
"This book is aimed at those whose motivation for passing examinations is high, but whose language experience is extremely limited," which, being interpreted, means it is for second chance students at the tech who are desperately seeking a paper qualification of some sort.

Alison Forbes' book of exercises and linking teaching material is nothing if not pragmatic. "While teaching through exercises is not considered particularly desirable, it is seen as the lesser of two evils. For this kind of pupil," she writes bluntly, and goes on to review her own book: "Formal, solid . . ."

Some will paraphrase that as "dull and stodgy" but "thorough and sensible" would be equally valid descriptions of this collection of exercises designed to build vocabulary and develop style. There are chapters on writing descriptions, joining sentences, paragraph writing, the proper use of tense, the writing of letters and reports, and on note-making. If the menu is unappealing, the food is filling, and there are some imaginative garnishes in the form of useful exercises based on a computer-dating application form, identikit faces and a street map.

£2.50 may seem a lot to pay for a 96-page paperback book, but that is not a lot to pay for an English language qualification when you urgently need one, and *Pen to Paper* will certainly help to bring one within the grasp of many who are prepared to work for it.

David Self



American newspaper cartoon of 1931 on the Japanese seizure of Manchuria. An illustration from "Civilization in the West" by Crane Brinton, John Christopher and Robert Lee Wolff. This fourth edition is published in paperback volumes: Part 1. Prehistory to 1715; Part 2. 1600 to the Present (Prentice-Hall International £9.75).

Potential success

You Can Teach Your Child Intelligence. By David Lewis. Souvenir Press £6.95. 0 285 62479 2.

We mostly want the best for our children, and all of us feel guilty that we haven't discovered Mozart or a Milton within our drum-banging, chanting four-year-olds. *New order*, I've told my child that she's had to scrawl wax crayon on the bedroom wall. I've tied her shoelaces for quickness when she can do it herself. That's the trouble. David Lewis's "programme of intellectual enhancement" reminds us that self-image is easily damaged (Have I made my child a Can't-doer?), that inborn inadequacy is a Binet-fostered myth, that there is "no such thing as an innately stupid child". Agreed. All liberal, right-minded parents and teachers shudder that immense responsibility of reaching towards the child's full potential. We should lap up the advice in *You Can Teach Your Child Intelligence* and make it another best-seller.

A tone of voice, a vagueness about goals give early warning that this may not be this simple. The style veers from detergent-out brightness to brisk Joyce Grenfell: "Above all, I am sure you will find it fun." Intelligence is a "passport", a "key" to a brave new self-directed world. Clever people are emotionally stable, physically healthy, and can spot and solve problems at a stroke.

Terminology smacks sometimes of the petrol engine; "Mary - A slow to warm up child", sometimes of computers and waste disposal. We put garbage in, we get garbage out. At other times the human brain is seen in terms of batteries ("supercharged memory"), cameras ("shutter mechanism"), ladders and maps. There is a mechanistic reliance on logic, straight-thinking, achieving goals.

Sheer genius

The Gates of Memory. By Geoffrey Keynes. Oxford University Press £12.50.

Sir Geoffrey Keynes is a distinguished surgeon, a famous bibliophile and the author of the standard work on Blake. Through his brother, Lord Keynes, he was connected with the Bloomsberries. Indeed, his survival until now might be thought to have opened all sorts of recent biographical rappers to legal threat, since so much of what the Bloomsberries did was open to criticism.

But Sir Geoffrey has been above all that. A friend of Rupert Brooke at Rugby; an acquaintance of Henry James; a colleague of Jacques Raver-

Worse, research references to cause study examples are vague and unconvincing. I don't believe a father who frowned with anger that his son came second in French.

first in geography and history. A coincidence, what happens in Lewis's four keys: Aristotle's image, motivation, and handling skills, when we of us top in French? You might however be doing the check-lists, charts, graphs, puzzles which determine a status for you and your child. You might also find some questions asking or plain unanswerable, so that is made for individual circles. Multiple choice is under scrutiny, for all.

Annoyed that the book isn't misanthropic, you conclude with the author that golden rules, connections between givens, operations and goals do solve problems, and that the Holt has a neat definition of intelligence as, "how we behave when we don't know what to do". What more, teachers may well be the thins, failing to inspire confidence and setting a pupil's achievement ceiling far too low. Schools don't instruct in techniques for solving problem solving.

A final stance on this morning children to become Olympic gymnasts at 12. A level maths successes at age 12 is difficult to find. David Lewis protests that his goals aren't narrow, materialistic and pays lip service to the limitations of intelligence. In a world where fear of failure is banished, where we all retain information in ladder steps and have appropriate levels of motivation, won't we all become mathematics professors, and what then stay at home to educate the children? Or am I just not thinking straight?

Ka Cox and husband of a David. Sir Geoffrey's career before the First World War would have been enough to provoke - say - three volumes by Michael Holroyd. But that is only the beginning. As a biographer of Blake, Brooke, Eliot, Gibbon, the sponsor of Job, A. S. G. was just a more famous figure than any of the Inklings. He was pioneering blood transfusion operations for breast cancer and senior surgeon at Barts and St. George's. In the Second World War he was almost certainly a top secret. His fecundity has been hostile to a true appreciation of his manifold abilities. He and his brother had a common Energy allied to ability in general. And in the case of this genius, it has been allied to amiability.

John Varty

Short story time

European Stories. 0 7062 4073 1. 0 7062 4076 6. Stories of Courage. 0 7062 4074 X. 0 7062 4077 4. City Stories. 0 7062 3774 9. 0 7062 3775 7. Ward Lock £2.95 and £1.35 each.

Ward Lock now has 20 anthologies of short stories in this well-produced series. The reason d'être of such collections often seems to be to cater to compulsive readers of certain genres, but these three books of about ten stories each invite useful thought and discussion.

European Stories aims at variety of focus and possessions on human life, with Chekhov's and Tolstoy's *The Bet* and *How Much Land Does a Man Need?* and Hermann Hesse's morality Augustus, where popularity is the disastrous light. Szabo's *At the Bus Stop*, in which a well-to-do son can no longer talk to town with his peasant father, is a natural pair to de Maupassant's *My Uncle* where it is the son given away to a rich couple who returns with love to his poverty-stricken family.

Italian warmth and stability are present in Prati's *The Removal*,

and in the background in Natalia Ginzburg's brilliant children's-eye view of a wayward mother. Gorky's *Birth of a Man* celebrates a new life with the poetic appropriateness of the sea's presence.

Five of the *Stories of Courage* have authentic war backgrounds. The elongation of time in conditions of danger is described in the slow-motion collapse of a wall during a fire in Sansom's story, and in the framework of *Adagio* by Len Deighton, a minute-long episode in a bombing raid on Germany. Perhaps the most monumental of the war stories is Frank O'Connor's *Guests of the Nation*, a study of terror and stoicism in British hostages in the Irish troubles meeting death at the hands of their Irish captors who have genuinely befriended them. A story that is finally an indictment of war itself.

Courage is usually associated with fear. Love introduced lifts it into high virtue, and in Maugham's *Gigolo* and *Gigolotte* the polarities are seen. A loving wife aided by her husband dives twice daily into a water-tank set alight with petrol, to build up their savings in a time of joblessness. Maugham makes a devastating analysis of the wealthy and

bored society that batters on and perpetuates her act.

City Stories touches Europe, America and South Africa from the beginning of the century to the present day and encompasses familiar urban themes: the frustration of the incompetent subordinate in Joyce's classic *Counterparts*, the deeply sensual satisfactions of working-class Londoners in the thirties in Stella Gibbons' *Saturday Afternoon*. The gang led by a twisted intelligence in Graham Greene's *The Destructors* contrasts with Neugeboren's *The Zodiacs* where the brains of the baseball team is creative and reconciling. Isolation and alienation are excellently represented in John Wain's story of the 40-year-old bachelor who has never matured in his life between lodging-house and office, and in Alan Paton's moving story *A Drink in the Passage* where his sculpture of a mother and child enables a black Jo'burg artist to experience a brief communication with a white man.

Since anthologies should stimulate further reading it seems a pity that this series has no notes on the authors.

Rachel Blake

Prehistory mystery

Life in Iron Age Britain. By Margaret Herdman. History in Evidence series. Pp. 165. £1.65. 245 53534 9.

Ancient Britain. By Amanda Clark. Coming up series. Pp. 165. £1.65. 245 53534 9.

Also in Evidence series. Pp. 165. £1.65. 245 53534 9.

Exactly why prehistory, with its tangled ingredients of mystery, detection and interpretation, should bulk so large in the curriculum of schools is hard to comprehend. Here at least are three books and a set of spirit-stickers which may help to do something to reverse the trend.

All place great weight on the use

of evidence. Indeed, Margaret Herdman's excellent little book on the Iron Age is one of a series entitled *History in Evidence*. This is a well-constructed, readable text and clear illustrations; but its usefulness as a topic or reference book in school will be diminished due to the exasperating omission of both an index and a list of contents. Since there are 30 chapter or topic headings, in a book covering a fairly narrow subject field both should be mandatory.

Growing up in Ancient Britain, on the other hand, is basically a hard-back library book, relatively highly priced, but complete with a detailed text which is easily followed and consulted - thanks to an excellent and comprehensive two-page index. A time chart, glossary, book list and list of places to visit are among other assets, though the illustrations are not. Regrettably the book makes use of one or two rather dubious Victorian illustrations of little pictorial merit and even less authenticity and

also a number of unlife-like museum reconstructions.

Exploring History: Ancient Britons, a short 40-page limpback textbook, has pictures which give an overall impression of solid worth rather than of exciting presentation. There are questions on every page in the textbook and many exercises in the related set of spiritmaster workbooks. There are ten of these and they provide a variety of assignments such as jumbled words, comprehension questions, role-playing exercises and blank spaces to complete. A minor criticism is that the author assumes as fact what can only be surmised - that the blue stones of Prescelly were quarried in Pembrokeshire and taken the 300 kilometres to Stonehenge. A likelier explanation, suggested by geologists, is that they were glacial erratics deposited by ice sheets in Wiltshire during the Ice Age.

Philip Sauvain

Words worthless?

Authors in Their Age: Wordsworth. By Anthony Adams. Pp. 165. £3.95. 216 90747 0.

A work which sets out, however modestly, to present an author in his cultural, social and political context should at least be accurate and consistent. In the case of *Authors in Their Age: Wordsworth*, there are no less than three discrepancies between the two versions.

In all, there is a general naiveté in approach to the subject-matter. The information about as complex a poet as Wordsworth one does not get from this book. It is not a "guidebook" nor like *Authors in Their Age: Wordsworth*, as claimed here, does it seem to be of the extent of the meaning of "franchise" but not "franchise" and describes as "franchise" a review of *The Excursion*, a letter of Keats, Coleridge's remarks about the Lyrical

Ballads in his *Biographia Literaria* and the stolen boat passage from *The Prelude*.

The approach to footnoting also lacks consistency - poetic sources are usually provided but few prose ones. This can be misleading: Keats's remarks (in a letter of February 3 1818) on "Wordsworth &c" are said to apply exclusively to *The Excursion*.

A curious mixture of hesitancy and dogmatism characterizes the book. Adams relies heavily on other critics' citing of contemporary material, but is quite prepared to insist that Wordsworth was "often at his most limited" when writing "in meditation" on observed experience. Lack of space alone cannot excuse such assertiveness. Indeed, if many of the quotations had been pruned, and the frequent repetitions removed, room might have been left for a much needed examination of the content of Wordsworth's major poems and also the religious context in which he was writing.

Although the illustrations are generally excellent (only the photographs of the Lake District are disappointing), one might wish Adams had been content to abide by his own conclusion: "The best commentator on Wordsworth remains the poet himself."

Edwina Burness

Drama talk

The National Association for the Teaching of English is now launching a series of pamphlets under the general title of NATE Papers in Education.

The first contribution to the series is by Dorothy Heathcote. The title of her pamphlet, edited by Myra Barris, is *Drama as Context*, and it contains two papers. The first "Drama as Context for Talking and Writing", describes a project on the theme of conquest which was undertaken with children in a Newcastle primary school. The second, "Preparing Teachers to Use Drama", describes an experiment in teacher education, a project based on Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

In these papers, Dorothy Heathcote explains her aims in teaching as being "to influence people to develop . . . a language whereby they can give consideration to matters of concern". She also stresses the special possibilities that drama offers: "Ari allows us to slow time, explore many meanings in many conventions".

Future titles in this occasional series will include papers by those working from both within and outside the Association. *Drama as Context* is available from the NATE Distribution Agency, 21 High Street, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4AD. £1.75 (post free), £1.30 to NATE members.

Jon Nixon

'Hey Mister, can I be in your book?'

Andy Sluckin spent three years as a playground sleuth, watching and wondering, observing and discussing. He shows how children learn and display in the playground a remarkably complex set of social skills and his new study clearly demonstrates the importance of playtime for preparing a child to cope in the adult world.

Just published is the third volume reporting the findings of the first large-scale observational study of primary school classrooms. The findings of the main study are presented so far in two other volumes: *Inside the Primary Classroom* (1980) and *Progress and Performance in the Primary Classroom* (1980).

Books and broadcasts can change lives. The combination of print, radio, television and group meetings - distance teaching - can transform education in developing countries. *Materials for Learning* is a practical book which provides guidelines for producing effective teaching materials. It is aimed at people actively involved in nonformal education, and will be particularly useful for Third World educators.

Growing up in the Playground

The Social Development of Children

ANDY SLUCKIN

Tutor in Social Psychology for the Open University Social Worlds of Childhood 0788 4 £9.50 10 September

Research and Practice in the Primary Classroom

Edited by BRIAN SIMON and JOHN WILLCOCKS

0850 3 £9.75 3 September

Materials for Learning

How to Teach Adults at a Distance

JANET JENKINS

Editor, International Council for Correspondence Education Newsletter. Paperback 08082 £7.95 1 October

ISBN Prefix: 0 7100

Routledge & Kegan Paul, 39 Store Street, London WC1

RKP

Evaluating the Evaluators

Maurice Holt

In the last few years there has been great interest in evaluating the performance of schools and teachers by assessing the achievements of pupils, and by other methods dependent more on interviews than measurement. This challenging book looks critically at the concept of evaluation, charting its growth in the United States, the subsequent establishment of an Assessment of Performance Unit by the DES and the increasing use of "blanket" tests by local education authorities.

The book concludes that, far from improving performance, the cumulative effect of the urge to evaluate performance will be to undermine teachers' confidence and will lead to an impoverished curriculum.

This is the third title in the *Studies in Teaching and Learning* series, edited by Professor Denis Lawton.

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Restructuring criticism

Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature. By David Lodge. Routledge and Kegan Paul £10.05. 0 7100 0658 6.

Structuralism with its highly abstract theorizing and specialized jargon remains to all but the chosen few a tightly closed book. Yet in literary criticism its methodology dominates research in the universities, and its adherents will never go back to less precise techniques. But teaching inside the universities continues on the same traditional lines prevailing in extramural classes, ordinarily reviewing, and literary journalism. This widening gap between theory and practice so disquieted Professor Lodge that in March 1980 he wrote in the *Observer* why he felt Structuralist techniques must be made more widely known.

"The intellectual and artistic life of a society requires a constant refreshment by new ideas, which are formulated by the intellectual avant-garde, and then permeate down through educated society by means of the media."

and he castigated the media for the almost total abrogation of its responsibilities towards Structuralism.

This collection, then, of 20 essays, reviews, and lectures is his own attempt to help remedy this by talking, without becoming incomprehensible, about the literary theory and critical application of Structuralism - this mainly in the first five pieces to which our attention will be

confined. Of the remainder - on Hardy, Waugh, Fiction and the Reading Public, and Contemporary Culture, most show the influence of the new methods, though some only minimally; but he confesses that working with Structuralism often means working *alongside* it, using its tenets where useful, but refusing to be dominated by it. This makes for an admirably honest, balanced and scholarly exposition.

Classical Structuralism, says Professor Lodge in his Preface, "is concerned with the analysis and understanding of culture as a system of signs, of which language is usually taken as the ideal model for explanatory purposes..." (It aims to do for literature... what grammar does for language: explain what the rules and constraints... by virtue of which meaning is generated and communicated. It is essentially formalist, and aspires to the status of science.)

From the ideological aberrations of the Poststructuralists and their "mythification and intimidation of the reader", he completely dissociates himself.

Two illuminating Structuralist analyses follow: of Hemingway's *Cat in the Hat* and of one of his own stories ("Of acknowledged triviality"), both texts being included. But his attempt to use similar techniques for evaluative purposes in *How good is 'Hard Times'?* is less successful, confirming what he wrote earlier that Structuralism works best where literary quality can be taken for granted, or is irrelevant. But that

surely leaves vast areas where it is less than adequate? These practical expositions are preceded by his brilliant inaugural lecture on "Modernism, Antimodernism and postmodernism", showing Structuralism's formalist affinities with the first, and are followed by the self-explanatory, "Historicism and Literary History: Mapping the Modern Period."

How far then is Professor Lodge's advocacy of a wider - though never exclusive - application of Structuralist techniques convincing? The attractions of a Structuralist approach to literary criticism, bringing scientific methodology to bear upon it, are undeniable; but the areas where it is most effective prove peripheral. At the heart of literary criticism lies the need to interpret and, above all, evaluate a text in literary terms; and it is here that Structuralism appears to have least to offer. And the price it demands is high: the assimilation of a formidable, abstract vocabulary which is very hard to believe will ever find wide acceptance among ordinary educated readers; a vocabulary that compels Professor Lodge, despite all his efforts to avoid incomprehensibility, to employ, within 10 pages, words like "narratology", "taxonomy", "prometric", "actants" and "indexical", or sentences such as "What the New Critics called 'spatial form' was precisely a pattern of paradigmatic equivalences concealed in the narrative syntagm." I like that "pre-cisely".

Hermann Peschmann

Seeking sanctuary

Sanctuary: The Original Text. By William Faulkner. Edited by Noel Polk. Chatto and Windus £9.95. 7011 3900 5.

Sanctuary has always seemed to exemplify the old adage that a great writer cannot write badly. "Bastily conceived to make money" on Faulkner's own account, it was "the most horrific tale I could imagine" dashed off in three weeks in 1929. Yet *Sanctuary* is as strong a cauterization of evil on "the old and tragic flank of the world" as Faulkner ever wrote, perhaps. It concedes nothing to popular taste.

In unearthing the typescript of "Sanctuary" Professor Polk has shown that the "Sanctuary" which was accepted for publication in 1929 and the "Sanctuary" which was published in 1931 are hardly the same book. Perhaps this is not surprising: between the writing of one and the publication of the other Faulkner married, worked as a coal heaver, and wrote *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury*. When he came to read the galley of the *Sanctuary* he almost totally rewrote it "in order not to shame" *The Sound and the Fury*.

That re-written version is far superior. Though Faulkner was hoing distasteful to claim he had written the *Sanctuary* in three weeks when the typescript goes January-May 1929 at the time, he was not misleading. The *Sanctuary* is a hastily written, hastily conceived book. Through involuted floods of dark prose images rise and fall; the narrative is divided between flashback and stream-of-consciousness musings; the horrifying impact of the story is blurred in the self-indulgence of the narrator. It is as if we are seeing "Sanctuary" raw, as it first wrote itself through Faulkner's mind, not yet separated out from the matrices which generated it.

This raw quality is curious, but it is not particularly strong on literary merit. *Sanctuary* is too diffuse. All the characters, except Horace Benbow, are much thinner, the eloquence of the plot is dimmed and instead of the inherent drama of murder, rape, abduction, trial and lynching, Faulkner focuses on the spurious drama of Horace's agonized incompetence before these events.

It is tempting to accept Professor Polk's theory that when Faulkner transcended his own narcissistic sexual problems he was able to disentangle them from his work. Certain it is that Horace's befuddlement with the charms of his sister (Narcissa)

and stepdaughter also befuddled the reader of the *Sanctuary*, where, as in the later version Horace's obsessions drop into perspective beside the deadly lusts of Popeye and Temple who are given equal air-play. In the "Sanctuary" of 1931 sexual passion is no more than the counter-felt bauble of the Lord of Misrule - the rope with the corn cob perfectly symbolizes - but in the earlier work a steeper structure makes sexual passion appear the power of darkness itself.

A telling example of the tightening structure can be seen in the differing treatments of the figure Snopes. Yoknapatawpha County cannot run, as it does, on corruption and misery without the connivance of such men as Snopes. In the *Sanctuary* Snopes is half-civil, almost jovial as he spills the beans of Temple's incarceration in a "Memphis whorehouse", which he himself finds too pricy. In the later version it is never in doubt that the pleasures of the flesh are very small fry compared to the "business". There are no loose ends in that logical pattern of evil. There is no honeysuckle of evil, as Faulkner writes like cold smoke, and nothing not dissolved "in the embrace of the season of rain and death".

Victoria Neumark

Respecting all dialects

Aspects of Language. By Dwight Bolinger and Donald A. Sears. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich £6.25.

It cannot be often that the third edition of a semi-scholarly work is substantially shorter than the second; always a remarkable book, *Aspects of Language* in its newest version may be unique in this respect, being not much more than half the length of its predecessor.

It remains an extraordinarily comprehensive account of a wide range of ideas and of issues in linguistics, designed as a teaching text, with a set of stimulating questions at the end of each chapter. Its only disadvantage is that Bolinger and Sears move so

swiftly and with such assurance from topic to topic that the student may be left stranded on an ice-floe out of breath. This is not because their explanations are not clear or their illustrations cogent: they have these qualities; it is because there is so much going on that without careful pacing, the student will not have time to absorb one notion adequately before going on to the next.

As in the earlier editions, the overall tone is one of moderation and enlightened scepticism, setting out theories and their contradictions with even-handed calm. They are against prescription, pedantry and linguistic snobbery, but aware of the social value of norms; indeed, their

pronouncement on this contentious area is worth quoting: "It is ethically correct and linguistically sound to insist on equal respect for all dialects as forms of language that one puts on and takes off at the behest of the community." The spoken language is given primacy, and the power of language to remake itself continually is due weight. No reader is likely to agree with all the views expressed by Professor Bolinger and his new associate, but no one can be other than impressed by both the scale and the modesty of their enterprise, the range of their reading and the vigour of their presentation.

Audrey Laski

English perspectives

The Structure of English Clauses. By David J. Young. Hutchinson £12.00. 0 09 141450 4. £5.95. 141451 2.

Syntax: A Linguistic Introduction to Sentence Structure. By E. K. Brown and J. E. Miller. Hutchinson £12.95. 0 09 138620 9. £5.95. 138627.

In the first sentence of their Preface, Brown and Miller say they need to explain why they have decided to write their book on syntax, "when there are many such books on the market." The fact that Hutchinson's has itself produced two in the same year gives pertinence to the point. But one of the reasons why there are so many must surely be because there is a variety of descriptive approaches; as these two textbooks illustrate most tellingly. Indeed, the "beginning linguistics student" (Brown and Miller) who may read them both may well recall the six blind men of Hindustan: English sentence structure is described to a large extent from quite different viewpoints, and with different terminologies. Undoubtedly, this is intellectually beneficial to a student; but it is more likely that he or she will read only one of the books, and so absorb but a single perspective. It seems a pity that students in higher education should not be encouraged even in such "introductory" textbooks to make evaluations; it is particularly reprehensible here, since both sets of authors claim to be impartial.

Of the two books, Young's is less theoretical, purporting to be "realistic and descriptive", if necessarily based "upon certain assumptions about the way a language may appropriately be described" (Preface). For most of these he draws heavily on systematic grammar, and particularly the ideas of John Sinclair ("Bound clauses") and Elitius Davies ("Impartitives"), as well as, passing, the writings of Michael Halliday. (In the rather slim bibliography, over one third of the references are to his work.)

In one sense then, the book presents itself as a readily comprehensible digest; but in another, as a fairly general account of certain topics with a particular emphasis (unexplained) from chapter five onwards on the verbal group, modality and comple-

mentation (especially the latter). The author frequently feels himself hampered by lack of space; but his organization of his material has had to lead to the removal of considerable cross-referencing and repetition. At times the "exercises" provided as convenient places for the introduction of topics not otherwise covered, a device which Brown and Miller also resort to.

Young at least provides answers: Brown and Miller do not. Nor, despite the dust-jacket dated 1980, does either exercise appear with every edition. It is difficult, in fact, to judge many of the claims made in the book there: it hardly, for example, "introduces the basic concepts" independently of any single model, since two out of the three sections of the book ("Constituent Structure" and "Morphology") are almost entirely dependent upon the methodology of transformational grammar, albeit in a somewhat simplified (old-fashioned) *Aspects* style.

(Strangely, the reader is not referred to Chomsky (1966) in the bibliography.) The presence of the title "Functional relations" is a suggestion that the authors are one of the limitations of the traditional transformational approach, but the formal separation from the functional section (unnecessarily large) and the philosophy is perhaps meant to frustrate their initial thesis, the *Aspects* of Young's, that syntax should be studied in its own terms as it is possible. Throughout, the authors seem uncomfortable about the model, but far from bringing its issues fully into the open, they keep them back again under the carpet, perhaps to be discussed more at length in their proposed "companion volume". Their third section, to be freed to a large extent from the machinery of rule-making, by itself most interesting.

Overall, however, like *Aspects* of Young's, it is rather limited in scope and partial in criticism of the text. David Bollos provides just such a critique in his study of *La cousine Béatrice*. He analyses the themes of the book, its characters and the circumstances of its composition. He gives a very clear explanation of the financial background which is so important in Balzac and so confusing to modern readers who may despair of ever coming to grips with rates of interest, *lettres de change* and the disposal of securities. At the same time he suggests why the novel is worth our attention and leaves us with a sense of the light of his comments.

Kathleen Wals

Le grand siècle

Seventeenth Century France. By Geoffrey Treasure. John Murray £7.50.

Sometimes referred to as "le grand siècle", the seventeenth century in France was an age that witnessed fundamental transformations in many areas of social, economic and political life. As the author points out, the diversification of conditions and practices in a provincially divided nation makes generalizations particularly hazardous, and yet it is possible to identify certain common trends. In state matters, a move toward centralization is clearly discernible; feudal separatism and autonomous regional authority had, by the end of the century, been largely replaced by the concentrated power of the absolute monarchy. The old "hand to mouth" management of the money supply was superseded by a more centrally planned and controlled economy, and the French army, hitherto composed of undisciplined bands of mercenaries, was finally brought under the direction of central administration and came to resemble the modern national army.

Yet any suggestion of "progress" must be treated with caution. In reality change was slow and suffered many setbacks, deeply rooted feudal attitudes persisted and proved to be a major impediment to the progress of the State, and the innate anti-

pathy of the nobility toward the commercial and industrial growth. Indeed as the century advanced, the country suffered more and more from the economic stagnation that was unquestionably retarded by the Counter Reformation and the vocation of the Edict of Nantes would finally dispel any illusion of religious tolerance, and persecution of the Huguenots would result.

The "grand siècle" is perhaps above all a century marked by a life intellectual activity and the emergence of a proud national consciousness. Rationalism and the scientific philosophy and the arts, the *lumières* and the *Académie Française*, maintained a close vigil over the written and spoken language.

The history of the seventeenth century is in some respects a history of the exchange of one form of absolutism for another. The absolutism of the feudal sovereign was succeeded by the absolutism of the monarch, the dogmatism of the Catholic Church, and in an anti-tyranny of academic institutions and the classical model.

In this revised edition, Geoffrey Treasure presents a broad and up-to-date picture of life and thought in seventeenth century France which will provide a valuable text for students of both social and political history.

Penny Turner

Guides to the labyrinth

Robin Buss on some French literary texts

Belaire: La Cousine Béatrice. By David Bollos. £1.80.

0 293 0092 7.

Queneau: Zazie dans le Métro. By W. D. Redfern. £1.50.

0 293 0086 2.

Camus: L'Étranger and La Chute. By Rosemarie Jones. £1.80.

0 293 0093 5.

Selected Poetical Writings. By Albert Camus. Edited by Jonathan H. King. Methuen Educational £3.25.

0 423 50740 0.

La Bête en Herbe. By Colette. Edited by Brian Stimpson. £2.95.

0 340 23302 8.

Camus et autres nouvelles choisies. By Prosper Mérimée. Edited by M. J. Tilly. £2.95. 0 245 53546 2.

Engagements. By Beatrice Braude and Brigitte Costa. £5.80.

0 15 522604 5.

The Distance, The Shadows. Selected poems by Victor Hugo, translated by Harry Guest. Poetry £6.95.

0 8546 008 0.

The "critical guide" is a parasite which feeds on examination texts and in success may be judged by looking at the shelves of Grant and Cutler's London bookshop where their own "Critical Guides to French Texts" have joined such already established members of the species as Hatier's *Trifid d'une Oeuvre* and Arnold's *Studies in French Literature*. They are not crib or model answers, but they readers want, on the whole, an understanding and a summary of mixed opinions rather than a and or partial criticism of the text.

David Bollos provides just such a critique in his study of *La cousine Béatrice*. He analyses the themes of the book, its characters and the circumstances of its composition. He gives a very clear explanation of the financial background which is so important in Balzac and so confusing to modern readers who may despair of ever coming to grips with rates of interest, *lettres de change* and the disposal of securities. At the same time he suggests why the novel is worth our attention and leaves us with a sense of the light of his comments.

W. D. Redfern attempts more but achieves less. He begins by saying that he will try to match "Queneau's idiosyncratic tone" and "simulate a comparably anarchic respect (sic) for order, back references, cross-references and inversions". No hope: Queneau's tone is unique and the ordered chaos of his work cannot be expected to quite different ends. Ironically, Redfern discovers that the most useful part of his guide, the Explanations of puns and allusions,

must be on points of detail. Dr Astington gives little or no indication of language register, for example in the list of "hesitation words" where the list is not possible from the examples to tell which are spoken and which written forms. There are some oddities in the translation: why "G.P.O." for "la Poste", which is too free, or "there occurred nothing suspicious", which is over-literary?

It is more than simply the book of the play of the book. Leon Rubin, who was assistant director to Trevor Nunn and John Caird on *Nicholas Nickleby*, has written a surprisingly uncelebratory account of the progress of the production, skillfully combining comment and anecdote into his clear narrative.

Rubin emphasizes that the production's unique problems were inseparable from its unique scale, and points to the difficulties of even convincing of the director's control any project so large, especially when it is being made up as it goes along, and

when everyone is entitled to have his say. Even the "gang of four" - Nunn, Caird, David Edgar and Rubin - sometimes seemed like just too many chiefs, and Nunn is congratulated for occasionally abandoning "directing by committee" to make decisions alone.

Rubin well conveys that it was debilitatingly hard work, not magic, that ultimately dragged the play before an audience just one day late. But he does allow one Hollywood success-story element to shine through - the surprise and delight felt by everyone involved when they discovered how much the audience loved the play. The evidence of the cast in *Leaving What All Their Hard Work had been for* was one of the most exhilarating elements of the early performances; recalling it can still bring a lump to the throat.

Lyne Truss

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they are not even indicated in the text; and Dr Tilly might have risked not glossing Tralagar ("the defeat of the French in 1805 by Lord Nelson"), in case you had forgotten).

"Mateo Falcone", the first of the four pieces in Dr Tilly's selection, shows Mérimée at his best, taut and impersonal, bringing his story to its chilling climax with classical restraint. The economy of the narration in this and the other stories, contrasts with Mérimée's romantic interest in exotic customs and with the supernatural: "La Vénus d'Ille" is one of the best ghost stories in any language and all the more disturbing since it leaves us with the choice of a "rational" explanation, while making it less convincing than the supernatural one.

In contrast to these sound editions of literary texts, *Engagements* seems to have little idea of who might want to use it or why and even loses sight of its alleged theme, to make an anthology of writing which takes a stand on particular issues. Why then is Victor Hugo, author of some magnificent polemical verse, represented by poems from *Les feuilles d'automne* and *L'air d'être grand-père*, two resolutely uncommitted collections? Pierre Daninos appears as the author of two portraits of the average Frenchman which prove only that he has the habit of pinching his own jokes. The footnotes are full of mistranslations and the extracts are followed by some comprehension questions and embarrassing suggestions for classroom discussion, guaranteed to create silence in any classroom I have known. Even so, many of the passages are interesting and the choice, from medieval farce to modern poetry, often imaginative. The addition of some common sense in presentation would have made this a valuable anthology.

Victor Hugo's translations from Hugo are a conscientious attempt to achieve the impossible. At times, for example in the lyric "Viens! - une flûte invisible..." and even in the splendid final stanzas of "Booz, endormi", he does catch an echo of Hugo's voice. But on the whole the conventions of modern English poetry are incompatible with Hugo's rhetoric and Guest's refusal in most of his versions to use rhyme makes it inevitable that much of the resonance of the original is lost. Compare the deliberate progress and

"Et frissonne dans l'ombre; et semble, au bord du vase, Un vol de papillons arrêté dans l'extase".

with the arbitrary fractures, interpolations and insipid tone of "resembling a flight of butterflies/there for a moment, motionless/living, in rapture." But the originals are not so good, and the French, this volume will show the variety and some of the magic of Hugo's poetry.

Robin Buss

French Structures. A Manual for Advanced Students. By Eric Astington. Collins £4.95. 0 00 433449 3.

French Structures attempts to do systematically what extensive reading in the language and contact with native speakers will do in a more erratic way, giving the student a feel for the sentence patterns of French, a knowledge of its forms and an awareness of the differences in the ways French and English speakers have of expressing their ideas. In an ideal world, this would be acquired in the few formal ways I have mentioned. But in the far from ideal world of the A level examination and the congenial under which most candidates prepare for it, Dr Astington's manual will prove a valuable aid.

The central section of the book consists of a series of grammatical guidelines which differs from a traditional grammar in that the explanations are kept to a minimum and the emphasis is on examples, collected from newspapers, modern fiction, the radio and, apparently from the *Petit Robert* dictionary. It differs, however, from a dictionary in that it is intended for active use, the student being advised to test himself by translating them. There are also sections on the phonological features of French, word-formation and relationships and sentence-building devices, especially the presentation of arguments. This will be useful in preparation for essay-writing where the approach in most course books is based on stimulating ideas, but the real problems arise from the student's unfamiliarity with the language of the discursive essay, which is no longer a feature of most O level syllabuses.

If one accepts that re-translation is a valid method for practising structures, any criticism of such a work

must be on points of detail. Dr Astington gives little or no indication of language register, for example in the list of "hesitation words" where the list is not possible from the examples to tell which are spoken and which written forms. There are some oddities in the translation: why "G.P.O." for "la Poste", which is too free, or "there occurred nothing suspicious", which is over-literary?

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Lyne Truss

Rhyme and reason

The Faber Book of Useful Verse. Edited by Simon Brett. Faber £6.95. 0 571 11781 3.

Everyman's Book of Evergreen Verse. Edited by David Herbert. J. M. Dent £3.95. 0 460 012460.

Fellow Mortals: An anthology of animal verse. Chosen by Roy Fuller. Macdonald and Evans £9.95. 7121 0635 9.

When Wilde said that all great art was perfectly useless the key word was "perfectly", which made it clear that he meant something positive. When, however, one observes that *The Faber Book of Useful Verse* is perfectly useless, one isn't saying anything nice at all. Here are mnemonics which no one could possibly remember (Tom Lehrer's "Elements") and instructions with which it would sometimes be foolish (Charles Sackville's advice to male lovers) and sometimes impossible ("How to build a his tin") to comply. The reader is never quite sure whether the guiding principle is predominantly comic or not.

Many poems have a genuine utility principle and no poetry, some have genuine poetic pretensions, some are caught napping in that half-way house between information and poetry that the eighteenth century was particularly prone to. ("The stable yields a stercoraceous heap." Cowper: "How to Grow Cucumbers"). The categories of advice are neat and wide-ranging, the chronological range (from Hesiod on) more than impressive, the editor unbounded in zest and assiduity, but the governing idea is awkward and perhaps Philistine.

Edward Neill

Before the Conquest

An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England. By David Hill. Basil Blackwell £16.00. 631 1181 6.

This is a beautifully produced volume, impressive in its lucidity and range - begot, it might be said, by enthusiasm out of industry. The author, relying carefully on established authorities, especially Sir Frank Stenton and Professor Dorothy Whitelock, has, within reason, accomplished what he set out to do, "to display all the evidence on Anglo-Saxon England that can be brought to bear on the subject of its geographical framework." Drawing extensively on the fields of history, archaeology, and charter studies, he provides ample material for a full, or nearly full, assessment of Anglo-Saxon achievement. He is not afraid of asserting his own views, even on occasion boldly contradicting Stenton on roads and communication and stressing both regional and chronological bias in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Maps illustrating the background cover geology and climate, and follow meticulously historical events, Viking invasions and trade, cam-

paigns to 1016, including a new evaluation of Ethelred II, and not neglecting Scandinavia, Ireland, Wales and the Continent. The illustration of the Administration, the Economy and the Church by means of maps should prove most useful to the student. The reduction of difficult and scattered material to ocular demonstration is a welcome exercise in clarity which provides a fascinating guide to the period.

The bibliography could, with advantage, be enlarged, and brought up to date as well as referring readers to current bibliographies for specialized material. When so much detail is assembled, it seems a pity that the author has not seen his way to reduce the wide range of Anglo-Saxon literature to cartographic form and make at least some allusion to the considerable Anglo-Saxon achievement in the field of the arts. But this is quibbling. The book is unusual, serves a useful purpose and provides a great mass of information in an admirably clear style, reflecting the extraordinary application of the author which guided the pleasures of scholarship to such successful ends.

Beatrice White

From stage to book

The Nicholas Nickleby Story: the making of the historic "Royal Shakespeare Company" production. By Leon Rubin. Heinemann £10.95. 0 434 65530 9. £4.95 65531 7.

This is more than simply the book of the play of the book. Leon Rubin, who was assistant director to Trevor Nunn and John Caird

Multicultural materials

Gillian Klein reports on progress and publications

Information services to teachers are very poor, at a time when duplication of time and effort is one of the few potential cuts that could actually benefit education. Social pressures have recently brought multicultural education into focus, and facilities for providing teachers with information have therefore grown. These could offer a possible model of support for other areas in which teachers are making changes.

Whether or not one agrees with all its conclusions, there is no doubt that the *Interim Report of the Rampton (Swann) Committee of Enquiry into the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Children* has stimulated a good deal of discussion and thought. Its recommendations must be taken into account, along with those in this year's Schools Council publication: *Multicultural education: the way forward*. The Home Affairs Committee, in their fifth report: *Racial disadvantage* (HMSO, July 1981) extends the admonition in the DES's *School Curriculum* (March, 1981) that "our society has become multicultural" with straightforward and constructive advice in very clear terms.

Exhortation and advice is important as the first step. How to act upon it is another matter, and here three clear strategies are emerging. Recommendations such as those of Rampton and Willey are backed up by pressure on appropriate bodies such as the DES, Schools Council examination boards and I.E.A.s. A review of initial and in-service teacher training is supported by research from the NFER, the CSD, ICME and the University of Keele, where John Eggleston's team has investigated *Inservice Teacher Education in a Multicultural Society* (report £20, summary £1) and identified reasons for poor demand. The project also makes important recommendations for improving the courses offered and their follow-up, for improving regional distribution, and for increasing demand among educators. A reassessment of printed resources currently used by teachers is planned. This would assess their relevance and seek out or create new materials. It is this third strategy with which I am here concerned, along with the information services necessary to support it.

A re-evaluation of resources can perform two crucial functions: it can modify teachers' attitudes and it can equip them with relevant materials.

Teachers who use the same materials year in and year out are going to hold the same ideas, however irrelevant these may be to the world around them. Encountering new materials, with a new viewpoint or approach, may be the first step in moving teachers' ideas closer to the children they work with.

Taking on a new area, or modifying the curriculum, is demanding and time-consuming enough, without the teacher having to spend endless hours in search of good resources. Information agents are needed who can put materials into the hands of practising teachers, or at least alert them to their existence.

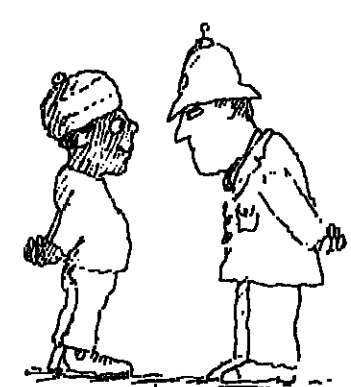
In multicultural education, in-depth services are provided by organizations like ILEA's Centre for Urban Educational Studies, the Bedford resources centres, and some I.E.A. multicultural advisory services, in, for example, Harringey, Coventry and Brent. All have advisers, librarians or teachers who maintain collections of up-to-date resources which they can discuss with visitors. This approach can also be used at in-service training courses.

Most requests for information are specific, triggered by a newly identified need in a particular school. Once one moves to the level of "pure" information, offering not a single resource but only information that it exists (and, possibly, its purpose and usefulness), these details are easily made accessible to everyone and can serve not only all teachers but also librarians, administrators and teacher trainers. Though so much less is offered, this kind of service has the advantage of being accessible to isolated teachers. Many queries come from teachers in areas where local support is available from teachers' centres, local NAME branches, or the Indian

Subcontinent, which may offer insights into the cultures, the experiences and even the values and feelings of people from far flung lands. But resources are people and places as well as publications, and the project tries to identify those most relevant to teachers. List 6 describes some 20 national organizations, what they do and the publications they produce. List 7 outlines some recent research projects relevant to multicultural education - their focus, duration and published results. And List 8 identifies some support services provided by I.E.A.s so that teachers can discover what, if any, support and information is available to them locally.

In the end, teachers need to evaluate materials for themselves, using lists as a guide and not as an authority. So a paper accompanies these lists, describing criteria by which to assess books used in the classroom and for children's private reading. Although this sounds extensive, the booklet is intended to be only a starting point. The lists are very selective, and merely introductory.

To serve those who want to inform themselves more fully, the Council aims to extend the Project with back-up in the form of a Resources Information Bank on Multicultural Education at Schools Council (RIB-MESC). This will be a computer store of data, initially of 2,000 - 3,000 entries, building up to a possible 10,000. Ironically, materials published in the US can already be found on ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) which can be tapped through most major libraries or through the NFER. RIB-MESC offers a printout, by post, of any topic specific to multicultural education. The computer is able to search for both general and particular materials and it can readily incorporate new information. The ultimate goal is for RIB-MESC to provide a comprehensive data bank on



Social pressures.

schools, LEAs and neighbourhood ethnic bookshops, although they do not realize it.

When the Schools Council set out to determine the most valuable form of information service they could provide for educators for multicultural Britain - and then to supply it - it was decided to respond at the broadest level of provision. The Schools Council has already prepared a sound theoretical background in *Multicultural education: the way forward*, to be followed shortly by *Teaching in multicultural Britain*, in which Richard Willey documents some initiatives and developments in schools. The printed part of my own project, *Resources for teaching in multicultural Britain* follows early next year. It consists chiefly of brief, annotated lists, four of which deal with initial reading for teachers.

List 1: *The Context: Multicultural Britain* documents the experience of ethnic minorities on the UK and, where chronicled, their backgrounds. List 2: *Teaching in Multicultural Britain*, briefly traces the history and current thinking on the issues. List 3: *Concerning Curriculum* considers some of the classroom implications of multicultural education: language and dialect, development education, teaching about race. Hopefully uncomprehensive because large areas of the curriculum, particularly in sciences and technology, are totally undeveloped in regard to cultural diversity, it also points up current inadequacies in resources.

List 4: *Bibliographies* goes on to describe a dozen useful published booklists and List 5: *Reading for Pleasure* suggests some "armchair travel" novels, set in Africa, America, the Caribbean or the Indian

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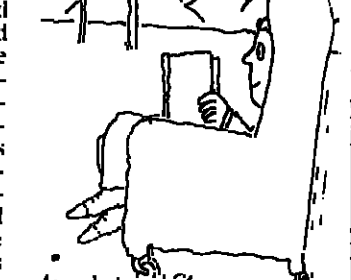
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Armchair travel.

resources, relating to multicultural education from early next year. At present there are no plans to feed in papers from periodicals, despite their immediacy and obvious value. For retrospective articles, the best resources are the abstracts in the annually indexed *Runnymede Trust Bulletin*, a free publication from the Trust, 37a Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. In March 1982 a new quarterly periodical, *Multicultural Education Abstracts* will be published by Carfax Publishing Co. Hadden House, Dorchester.

Acceptance of PILOT as a teachers' tool has not been as widespread as might be imagined for two main reasons. First, useless imitations of the real language abound, generally going by the name TINY PILOT or MINI PILOT or PICO PILOT and assuming only cassette-based computer systems. The common factor is that the language is so weakened in order to squeeze it into 4K, not use discs and keep the cost under £5 (etc, etc) that would be users of the full scale PILOT are put off the language.

Second there is an assumption that PILOT is some CAL panacea. Like any other tool it has its limitations, but for those applications where PILOT is suitable, there is no doubt in my mind that the remarkable Apple PILOT is the one to go for. Apple PILOT has facilities for recording a tune or map or any picture - a colour or black and white - on a disc and calling them up during a PILOT program's run. It would certainly be possible therefore to use Apple PILOT to prepare teaching material for many aspects of geography: modelling or map reading or meteorology as well as to administer certain of the usual aural tests in music.

A physics simulation could quickly be written - theoretical graphs and experimental details could be saved in appropriate disc files and called up as necessary. Even those Greek gods used in the theory present no problem as you can define your own character set. You could even program drill and practice Japanese verbs if you wanted - and time the responses.

The Apple PILOT programming language consists of twenty-two instructions, of which nine are the most important and include displaying a message on the screen; accept an answer from the student; check that answer in various ways; jump to the next question or give him another go.

It is the MATCH instruction - the one which examines the student's reply for the correct answer - which is used more often than not missing in the TINY PILOT implementations of the language. In Apple PILOT it is possible to insist that the correct answer alone is given, or that any sentence containing the correct answer is allowed or that the correct answer is given at the beginning of the sentence or other variations. Perhaps the most important extension to COMMON PILOT here are the G (Graphics) command - which shows lines and dots on the screen - and the S (Sound) command which plays musical notes on the Apple's speaker.

What makes the system so much more powerful than its competitors is the facility to store pre-recorded graphics and sound for later program recall. This is done by means of one of three editor programs supplied: one for preparing the pre-recorded graphics; and a similar one for sound.

All three of these editors have the same kind of structure and "user interface". For example, in all three editors to finish what you are doing

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High flying language

Michael Thorne reviews the new Apple PILOT

The computer language PILOT (which stands for Programmed Inquiry, Learning or Teaching) was developed in 1968 by John Starkweather. The object of PILOT is to make writing Computer Assistant Learning (CAL) programs easier. PILOT, it is said, enables the CAL programmer to concentrate more on the subject matter than on the intricacies of programming.

Apple PILOT is based on a version of the language known as COMMON PILOT developed more recently by Gerhold and Kheriaty. At least one fairly complete version of COMMON PILOT is already available for CP/M based machines and others like the Research Machines 302.

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Money, money, money

The Teaching Support System in Money Education
LOA/ASLO Information Centre,
Buckingham House, 62-3 Queen
Street London EC4R 1AD £2.00.

Since the mid-1960s, the Life Offices' Association (that is, life insurance companies) and their Scottish equivalent have been increasingly committed to money management education in schools. This latest teaching pack - at what must be a heavily subsidised price - is intended for use by 14 year olds and upwards, in a range of possible teaching contexts from CSE to post-exam crash courses in the fifth year or sixth form General Studies. It consists of a teacher's handbook; 25 copies of pupil's workbook; 18 worksheets for duplication; and a boardgame for up to six players.

The work is divided into three themes. "Decisions" looks at the range of money choices, introducing the whole concept of budgeting on individual, family, corporate and national levels. "Pay Packer" is self-explanatory, with a special emphasis on part-time employment of school children and the legislation which controls it. And "Bed, Board and Lodging" discusses the financial issues which will face young people

setting up home for the first time. The Teacher's Handbook puts this material in context, and includes extra preparatory work.

Generally, the pack is quite useful and practical - though strongly (but not unbendably) orientated towards "traditional", high-discipline teaching methods. This is reflected in the exercises, which tend to be tight-lipped and discouraging of imagination - for instance, "Vocabulary Assessment (one word answers)". This particular worksheet contains some striking and not untypical oddities - how is vocabulary assessed by mental arithmetic questions? And what Marxist mole had a hand in the wording of this question: "When a businessman sells something for more than it costs, and pockets the difference, it is known as . . . ?"

Naturally enough, this pack is strongly committed to what one might call the CBI view of reality. Its starting point is that "too many young people have attitudes more appropriate to the boom periods of the fifties and sixties rather than the eighties. This situation is reflected, of course, in the fact that only institutions like life insurance firms can afford to be so unrestrained as to produce textbooks at subsidised prices.

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The status quo

by Philip Venning

A Question of Equality
BBC 2 7.10pm
Nov 24 - Dec 22

Billions have been spent on education since the war, much of it with the deliberate purpose of trying to reduce both educational and social inequalities. But these inequalities seem extremely stubborn. Official policies designed to increase equality of opportunity have frequently had little corresponding effect on equality of outcome. The working class, blacks, women, all continue to do less well academically than they should do. Why?

Every Tuesday night up to Christmas a series of five 45 minute programmes, *A Question of Equality*, will give an educational pundit the chance to give a personal answer and suggest some remedies. And on the whole they are worth listening to.

In the first programme Eric Midwinter presents a generally convincing picture of the remarkable tie-up between children's social backgrounds and their chances of jumping various educational hurdles - in particular university entrance. It is well known that the expansion of higher education produced no increase in the proportion of working class children going into it.

In a case study of a middle class area, Bromley, and a working class one, Sandwell, Midwinter points out that the latter has better pupil: teacher ratios but gets far fewer pupils into university. All you need to do is look at the parents, he suggests. In Bromley 13 per cent of them went to university, and 14 per cent of 18 year olds are starting degree courses. In Sandwell only 3 per cent of parents are graduates,

and 3 per cent of present young people are on degree courses.

If the working classes are not naturally thicker (and some quick assertions from experts dispose of this idea), and working class parents not less interested in their children's education (and a categorical denial is enough for this), then, says Midwinter, the answer must lie in the child's immediate environment. The camera switches to a middle class home, straight out of Posh Simmonds, with plenty of books, bright colours, copy of *The Guardian*, and a children's desk in the centre of the kitchen. This is the ideal. Live like this and your child too can go to university was the clear message.

In the rather messy studio discussion that follows Lord Vaizey and Stuart MacLure, editor of the *TES* fire a few telling shots at the Midwinter thesis, but the audience is left considerably confused about what should be done - if anything.

Eric Midwinter's heretical proposal that we should spend less money on schools and books, and more on encouraging working class parents to take an interest in their children's education, is not surprisingly challenged. Both MacLure and Vaizey repeat the new orthodoxy - education does make a difference, only it takes a long time, and no one in the know ever expected it to transform the world overnight.

It is all very well to identify the advantages of the middle class home but must all parents be forced to read *The Guardian*?

The second programme gives the principal architect of the current Labour policy on the public schools, Professor Tessa Blackstone, the chance to put her case, with some stock scenes of boys in boaters, and

croquet, and to do battle with the two most experienced of public school PR men, Dr John Rae of Westminster, and Michael McCrum, formerly of Eton.

An old hand like John Rae learned long ago that the strength of his case by conceding some truth to the unavailing criticism that the public schools are socially divisive. But in this programme he argues that this disadvantage is small, and that the complete abolition of the schools would make little real difference to equality. It was a cheap and silly short-cut to a utopia that probably does not exist - a classless society.

Tessa Blackstone should learn this debating tactic. While it is unquestionably true that these schools do institutionalize divisiveness, and value conformity and the status quo, the claim that they give special access to places of power is rapidly becoming invalid. To state the school background of the present Cabinet only tells us about the 1930s. It fails to admit the social revolution that has taken place and which Michael McCrum briefly mentions.

Ultimately the case for abolishing the public schools depends not on arguments about subsidies versus savings, or the deterrent effect of the Oxbridge entry exam, but on a simple value judgement. Is the goal of equality brought sufficiently nearer to justify removing the freedom of parents to pay for private education? Tessa Blackstone, who rather alarmingly implies that this freedom is of little worth because it can only be invoked by a minority, believes that it is. The public school heads, for whom social equality is clearly not a high priority, do not.

In following weeks the series looks at the poor performance of West Indian children, the unequal position of girls in school, and finally at the undue prestige given university education at the expense of further education.

In the eye of the hurricane

by Victoria Neumark

FILM
Hurricanes, Tornados and Other Weather
16mm, colour, sound, 16 mins
Educational Media International, 5 Boileau Road, London W5. Hire, or buy for £155.

The wonderful pictures from weather satellites would alone make this a useful film for lower secondary students. When those pictures are intercut with newsreel footage of devastating storms in action, diagrams, models and sequences in and from the "hunter" planes which pursue and enter hurricanes, as they are - you have a really clear exposition of some kinds of weather.

The film's American origin is a positive boon. Both tornados and hurricanes occur within the shores of the USA and so all the illustrations of self-generating circular storms form a consistent whole. Few will ever forget the image of a tornado attacking a city in Nevada like a gigantic electric drill or the drama of the personnel in the "hunter" planes battling against cloudy forces.

The film's ending is typically American too. Whilst not everyone may share in his belief in the inevitability and perfectability of science and progress, it will at least leave pupils both optimistic and better informed.

Briefings Radio and TV For schools

Cities (Monday, 9.47 TV)
This series stimulates 14 to 16 year old below average pupils to think about towns and cities. Scotland here is life in Milton Keynes, designed as a completely self-contained city to relieve pressure on London.

British Social History (Monday, 10.38 BBC1)
"The Railway Age" is a documentary programme on the development of a national network in the 1830s and 40s. Explores the lives and ambitions of stockholders, directors and shows 14 to 16 year olds that people like Stephenson were not just inventors.

Exploration Earth (Monday, 11.00 VHF4)
The term ends with two major programmes continuing the theme of international geography. New geographical interest is featured: motivate ten to twelve year olds to look at the world about them.

Resource Units 11 - 13: Roman (Tuesday, 10.35 BBC1)

What were the differences between Roman and British land? What changes did the Romans introduce to Britain? In "Pax Romana" 11 to 13 year olds investigate and note the changes surviving today.

Watch (Tuesday, 11.00, Wednesday, 14.01 BBC1)

Two programmes for six to eight year olds see what Bethlehem is like and how Arab babies are swaddled in swaddling clothes.

It's Your Choice (Wednesday, 11.00 BBC1)

"Working in different places" deals with the physical environment of town and country and the effect of this on job supply. The format of the programme helps 16 year olds understand the stages and disadvantages of working in the town compared with the country, by introducing filmed and dramatized sequences.

The World of Work (Wednesday, 14.20 VHF4)

What are the alternatives to a full employment? "Instead of a job" features continuing education, voluntary work and working for oneself.

Inside Pages (Thursday, 9.30 VHF4)

Bill Oddie presents a programme for ten to twelve year old devoted to new publications in hardback and paperback. Ends with a reading for separate study.

Continuing education and OU

Documentary Re-run (Friday, 11.10 TV)

"The Secret Life of the Mole Shearwater" is a study of the life and habits of this bird, which lives in burrows on a Welsh island yet feeds in the Bay of Biscay.

Women in the Eighties (Sunday, 10.00 night BBC1)

Five documentary films looking at important issues concerning the employment of women in Great Britain, U.S.A. and Scandinavia.

A Question of Equality (Tuesday, 10.45 BBC2)

Since 1944 education policy has looked for equality. How far has it been achieved? (See review on page 31.)

Lecture: The Year 1906 (Wednesday, 22.05 Radio 3)

A.J.P. Taylor's lecture to mark the 75th anniversary of the Hulton Association given in the City of London.

The Interview (Thursday, 11.00 BBC2)

The OU series "Governments" continues with preparation for the interview of candidates for the position of English teaching coordinator.

Childrens books

New lamps for old?

Neil Philip looks at some new versions of children's classics

When J. M. Barrie read *Pilgrim's Progress* as a child, "so enamoured was I that I turned our garden into sloughs of Despond, with pea-sticks to represent Christian on his travels". R. L. Stevenson, clamouring to play with his toy soldiers on the Sabbath, was given permission when he promised to make them re-enact Christian's adventures. Few adults now have much enthusiasm for Bunyan, and children are unlikely to come across him except in reprinted editions such as *Pilgrim* (Andre Deutsch £4.50) in which Bunyan's story is concisely summarized by Ronald Fuller and illustrated in expressive water-colour by Pat Marriott. But perhaps they would still like him, and for this reason: that *Pilgrim's Progress* is, as J. L. Singer puts it in his book *Daydreaming and Fantasy*, "the elaborated private fantasy of an obsessive neurotic".

That description could serve for most of the great children's classics: Barrie, Carroll, Andersen. That edge of neurosis, the sense of psychological, emotional, spiritual urgency, is what gives the books their lasting and tantalizing appeal. For after all, those books are most satisfying, for child or adult, which we do not fully understand. "Oh dear! I can't understand that," says Princess Irene in MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*; "I dare say not. I didn't expect you would. But that's no reason why I shouldn't say it," her great-grandmother replies.

Angley writes something similar in *The Water-Babies*: Tom was "a little frightened at the long words, and not understanding them the least; as, indeed, he was not meant to do, or, you either".

That passage is missing from the new edition of *The Water-Babies* (Paper Tiger £5.95; illustrated with some verse by Susan Rowe), as is about half of the text. The abridgement is sensible: the epigraphs, the quotations, the sentimentality, the tedious mock natural history, the jokes for the adults, the Rubelaisian list, the Donquixotes parody of Darwinian evolution, and the moral - "stick to hard work and cold water" - are swept away, leaving the main storyline uncluttered. I do wonder, however, whether the story's clarity is not one of its strengths.

Kingley demonstrates how authors of such books may themselves have no clear understanding of what they are doing. His obsession with cleanliness, his ambivalent attitude towards exploited Tom, even his love of this all now seem fraught with

implications which escaped his Victorian readers. We should beware, with our twentieth-century minds, of failing to grasp that *The Water-Babies* is not only a repressive text: repression and liberation are twin themes, eddying through plot, form and language, and it is the tension between them which catches the imagination.

The story of *Peter Pan* is another one with a curious and compelling flavour. By turns cynical, romantic, facetious, deadly serious, realistic, surreal, moving, mawkish, both book and play still exert a strong pull. Their potency has nothing to do with suitability or acceptability (Wendy's housewifery may have lost its lustre, it derives from their absolute honesty). *Peter Pan* illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Hodder and Stoughton £7.95) is a new edition of the novel *Peter and Wendy*, not the play *Peter Pan*. To change the title seems to me a mistake, confusing the two works and destroying the titular symmetry with another Barrie work, *Tommy and Grizel*: a small loss, perhaps, but a significant and damaging one.

What we have in *Peter Pan* is the inward truth of Barrie's emotional life. It is a map of his mind; as Grizel saw of Tommy's "wandering child" story, "in a subtle way this book was his autobiography". It is Barrie's most optimistic treatment of his great tragic theme: that the only true preserver of youth is death. Barrie's characters are haunted either by lost youth or unattainable maturity.

Despite its drawing-room whimsy, despite Tinker Bell and the fairy dust, *Peter Pan* is not sentimental: its last word is "heartless". Behind all the fun of the plot and the jokes of the text, *Peter Pan* is a bitter book, poignant with self-knowledge. It is Barrie's own emotional retardation which is expressed in Peter, as in Tommy. And though Peter says he does not want to grow up, a stage direction tells us, "So perhaps he thinks, but it is only his greatest pretence".

Trina Schart Hyman's fey, Rackhamish illustrations catch a world where a baby's first laugh becomes a fairy, but not one where every time a child breathes - and Peter breathes "vindicatively" as fast as he can - an adult dies.

Hans Christian Andersen is another man who made enduring fables out of a life in which the bitter outweighed the sweet. Naomi Lewis's new selection of Hans Andersen's

Fairy Tales (Puffin 95p), though it includes only twelve tales, captures his creative intensity, in warm, fluid, conversational prose which begs to be read aloud. These are fine translations, of an author who has eluded many a translator's grasp.

Illustrating Andersen, like illustrating Barrie, is less easy than it looks. Philip Gough's pictures in the Puffin edition are simple black-and-white decorations, attractive but dispensable. Michael Hague's full-colour extravaganzas are, as the title suggests, the point of Michael Hague's Favourite Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales (Methuen £6.95). I find them sentimental and crowded, and am irritated by their false medievalism. A good deal of care and thought has gone into them, though, and into the texts too. Hague misses Andersen's "tone" by overstatement: Josef Paleček's romantic quasi-Chagall illustrations to M. R. James's translation of *The Little Mermaid* (Faber £4.95) err in the opposite direction. Wispy-wispy is the word. Least successful of all is Errol Le Cain's picture book version of *The Snow Queen*, with ruthlessly shortened text by Naomi Lewis (Puffin 95p). Le Cain's Snow Queen is a Vogue model in the latest Paris fashions; his illustrations, despite a bright, luxurious surface, often seem misguided. Kay and Gerda with the sledge, for instance, is a crude debasement of Bruegel's "Hunters in the Snow". The truncated text is worrying, too. The version of "The Snow Queen" in *Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales* transmits what lies behind the tale; a child who reads it at the right moment will be haunted for life. A whole area of art and emotion will be permanently illuminated by the balancing figures of the fierce, frigid Snow Queen and dogged, warm Gerda. The picture book adaptation cuts away the metaphysics - as if they were the wrapping, not the heart of the story - and the magic leaks out of the wounds.

One of the authors who learned from Andersen was Oscar Wilde, whose *The Nightingale* and the Rose is newly illustrated, in washed out pastel colours empty of any emotion, by Freire Wright and Michael Foreman (Kay and Ward £3.75). Wilde's fairy tale often seems precious in picture book editions. The Happy Prince illustrated by Joanna Isles (Evans £3.95) is no exception. As with Andersen, it is the salt tang which evaporates. Joanna Isles's pretty, homely illustrations cannot compete with Wilde's own startling



A scene from Hansel and Gretel by Anthony Browne

word-pictures, even in this abridged text.

The brothers Grimm, those other perennial names on the covers of fairy tale books good and bad, were collectors, not creative writers; but the stories they collected and transcribed turn internal conflict into external narrative in much the same way as Barrie and Andersen, though they substitute collective wisdom for individual neurosis. These are public not private fantasies, and they have a flexibility of application individual writers rarely achieve.

The new Grimm volumes are an encouraging selection. Moira Kemp's *Cinderella* ("Aschenputtel", Hamish Hamilton £3.95) is a lush version of this fierce story in a medieval setting. It is particularly noteworthy for its imaginative use of birds. Elizabeth Zwarg's *The Seven Ravens* (MacDonald £4.50) is simply retold and fetchingly illustrated in Rackham-influenced water-colour. Pauline Ellison has provided a series of marvellously rich, sumptuous colour plates for Richard Adams's selection of Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (Penguin £6.95). Despite slightly stiff translations which would have benefited from revision, and a contentious introduction, this is a good edition. One of the stories Adams chooses is "Hansel and Gretel", a tale which many argue cuts too close to the heart of the matter to be suitable for children. This is, I think, adult's

faintheartedness, not children's. There are two new Hansel and Gretel picture books, illustrated by Antonella Bolliger-Savelli (Kay and Ward £3.25) and Anthony Browne (Julia MacRae £4.95). Antonella Bolliger-Savelli's book is adequate: the "primitive" pictures have a naive appeal, and the text is readable. It bears no comparison, however, with Anthony Browne's piercingly original treatment. Browne's Hansel and Gretel are contemporary children, dressed for the urban playground. He has understood that "once upon a time" means now. In less subtle hands this insight could be a recipe for disaster; but not here.

Though the famine which is the excuse for the callous treatment of the children finds an analogue in today's unemployment, the pictures make it quite clear that this is a story about jealousy not poverty. The wicked stepmother (mother, in Grimm) has fancy clothes and a colour TV she watches from an easy chair while the rest of the family sit blankly round a bare table. The most telling of all the illustrations shows the sleeping family reflected in the dressing table, which is loaded with perfumes and cosmetics and spilling clothes from its tight-packed drawers. No children will be deceived by the ageing process by which her face mutates into that of the witch.

continued on following page

Dennis the Menace and Toyah

Roy Blatchford on English series

ETV and RADIO
Middle English
TV, Tuesdays 9.53 Thursdays 11.39
BBC Radio, Fridays 9.15
Soundtrack
BBC Radio, Fridays 9.20

"Middle English" is not a helping of Chaucer and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* for the middle years, but the reknitting of the long-running "Writers' Workshop/About Books" series for 9-12 year-olds, with producer Peter Tabern seeking to plug a few gaps in schools television resources for this area of English teaching. In place of the previous fortnightly transmissions, "Middle English" goes out weekly, with a polished anthology of prose and poetry and handsome pupil worksheets for each term's output.

This autumn there are five repeats carried over from "Writers' Workshop" and five new programmes. A two-part dramatization of *The Shipwrecked Sailor* (September 22, 29) launched the revamped series. Philippa Pearce's intricately conceived work is a compelling narrative on the page, sparsely on dialogue and strong on understated fear and tension. The dramatization was similarly powerful in mood, and included some eerie sound effects and ghoulish images, but it proved overlong and wrongly paced for the class of 11-year-olds with whom I watched. It was a brave production, but one which would have fared considerably better in just one twenty-minute slot.

The About Books corner is now called Middle Pages and focuses on fewer titles in detail. The first Middle Pages (October 13, 15) featured Bernard Ashley's *Break in the Sun*, Beverley Cleary's *Ramona and Her Father* and N. B. French's *Tig's Crime*, and included the well-tried combination of dramatized readings (accompanied by stylized graphics on screen), filmed extracts and studio chat. Presenter, Willie Rushon, has

the essential air of familiarity with the books he has been asked to introduce, though the children talking to camera seemed over-rehearsed and unconvincing.

Last week's *Dennis and Friends* (November 3, 5) offered a rare opportunity to see inside *The Beano* factory. The Scottish publishers of *Dandy*, *Beano*, *Topper*, *Beezy* et al, and Managing Editor, George Moonie, have jealously guarded the success of their million-seller comics, so their production process - from ideas to words to pictures - was a fascinating one to watch. Follow-up activities to the jaunty filmed programme - complete with Dennis interfering with the cameraman - are interestingly developed in the pupils' worksheets.

Two transmissions next term further highlight the range of this new series. *Feldspots... Bloodspots?* contains some sickening documentary film of hare-coursing and fox-hunting neatly juxtaposed with scenes of fishermen calmly at play, interviews with schoolchildren, the RSPCA and the League Against Blood Sports, together with some interesting historical background and critical commentary by presenter Alan Hydes, which raise the inescapable moral questions pinpointed in the programme's title. In contrast, *You Tell Me* brings together the marvelous talents of poets Michael Rosen

and Roger McGough presenting some of their best work from the *You Tell Me* collection. "Noonigan" and "The Lesson" will prove particular hits with most 12s.

BBC Radio have done a similar bit of reshaping of schedules: most of their secondary English programmes are this term broadcast in a block on Friday mornings in the hope that schools will record the whole package and thereby explore a range of sound resources. There are common themes and topics linking the various series, and to the familiar "Speak", "Books, Plays, Poems" and "Listening, Talking, Writing" two new initiatives have been added: "Sounds" and "Soundtrack".

Encouraging children to listen and develop aural skills is notoriously difficult, but "Sounds" offers five-minute anthologies of sound effects structured on themes or as a series of contrasts or as a narration - for pupils to work with, perhaps leading to personal writing or forming part of a project.

Australia (October 16) gave a pot-pourri of effects from boomerangs to ships sounding in Sydney harbour, while *Flight* (October 30) embraced the noises of a bird sanctuary, hot-air balloons, helicopters and an airport terminal. The strangely titled *The Executioner and the Time-Machine* (November 27) incorporates a chilling sequence of murderous

sounds ideal for prompting story-writing, with *War* (November 20) including a chronological history of battle sounds from medieval jousting cries and cavalry charges to the sinister quiet of a nuclear holocaust (Jill Paton Walsh's *Fireweed*, set in London during the Blitz, is serialized in "Listening, Talking, Writing" during the following weeks).

"Soundtrack" comprises 10-minute documentaries ranging from interviews with rock musicians to analysis of the language of the midshipman's journal (*Ship's Log*, March 5). Earlier this term, *Blind-Man's Buff* (October 2) featured conversations with blind people on the subject of their wonderfully gifted guide-dogs.

Diving For Treasure (November 20, 27) is a two-part investigation of the marine excavations surrounding the Tudor warship, the Mary Rose. An interview with Margaret Rule, Director of Excavations, and some fascinating underwater interviews and commentary employing new recording techniques add up to an exciting resource programme.

Another two-part programme *Pop Concerts* (January 22, 29) spotlights singer Toyah Wilcox and reads as they put their show on the stage, a lively, topical subject which will encourage pupils to conduct their own documentary interviews and develop the vital skills of listening for a purpose.



Billy Whitte in *The Beano*

Talking about Bodley Head non-fiction

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Illustrated in full colour by Colin Threadgill

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childrens books

The third dimension

Brian Alderson meets the illustrator, Rodney Peppé

When Rodney Peppé published his first picture book in 1968 he hardly needed his billing as a man with "an impressive career in the field of commercial art". His choice of subject, *An Alphabet Book*, was a natural one for designers getting into children's books, and many of its features bore witness to professional assurance: the use of pudgy Cooper Black for the 26 letters, the list schematized pictures incorporating poster and collage techniques, the colourful, balanced planning of every double-page spread.

Given such a start, the consequences were fairly predictable. *An Alphabet Book* was followed by a counting book in similar style, *Circus Numbers* (1969), and then by a succession of forays into traditional verse, with single books devoted to *The House that Jack Built* (1970), *Simple Simon* (1974), and *Humpty Dumpty* (1975), and with little collections like *Hey Ridle Diddle* (1971) and *Cat and Mouse* (1973) - recently abridged from 44 to 32 pages and issued as a Picture Puffin.

As so often happens with designers who move into this familiar landscape through the professional, the Peppé graphic style of emphatic foreground drawing against plain backgrounds, but they rejoice in some nicely dotty texts (far superior, for instance, to the texts of the over-praised Bruna books) and in a hero whose character blossoms out of a few deceptively simple drawn lines. Indeed, Henry seems to have

loosened Mr Peppé's whole approach to picture books, and new play elements have lightened the standard formula, with picture puzzles in the *Puzzle Book* of 1977 and a put-Humpty-Dumpty-together-again page in the relaxed *Humpty Dumpty* of 1975.

It is surely no coincidence that these developments in Rodney Peppé's picture books have occurred during a period when his interest in moving toys has been growing and when he has been designing and making some quite superb modern versions of wooden toys from the past: Climbing Monkey, who rushes up and down a string, Circus Lion, who wags his tail, shakes his head, and rolls his eyes as you pull him along in his cage, Double-headed Strong Man (with acknowledgments to Magritte).

Twenty-two such toys are discussed, with instructions for making them, in *Rodney Peppé's Moving Toys* (Evans £5.95) - a book which has proved an inspiration to the craft-literate writer of the present article - but alongside such described models one must record that there is also in existence a plain wooden elephant with a jointed trunk, and a Very Superior Residence for Mice, built in a size 8 Hush Puppy. Here, crossing the boundary between static toy and dynamic book, are models that have given a new impetus to Mr Peppé's work as an illustrator, and it comes as no surprise that his new

book for this season *The Mice Who Lived in a Shoe* (reviewed on page 36) should be not only his most successful picture book to date, but also one which shows the artist breaking new ground in his handling of the form, colour and movement of his illustrations.

Rumour has it that those mice are set for further adventures and that even now a ten-kettle galleon is



Rodney Peppé by Richard Cox

under construction. One watches the horizon with great anticipation.

All the hardback picture books by Rodney Peppé mentioned above are published by Kestrel except for the "Henry Books" which are from Methuen (three titles in hardback, all in paper).

Souls of druids dead and gone

Irish Tales and Sagas. By Ulick O'Connor. Illustrated by Pauline Bewick. Granada £4.95. 0 246 11333 2.

Raven the Trickster. By Gail Robinson. Illustrated by Joanna Troughton. Chatto and Windus £4.94. 0 7011 2600 0.

The Italian Fairy Book. By Margaret Mayo. Illustrated by Cara Lockhart Smith. Kaye and Ward £4.95. 0 7182 1283 5.

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The Magic Tree

Poems of Fantasy and Mystery

Chosen by David Woolger

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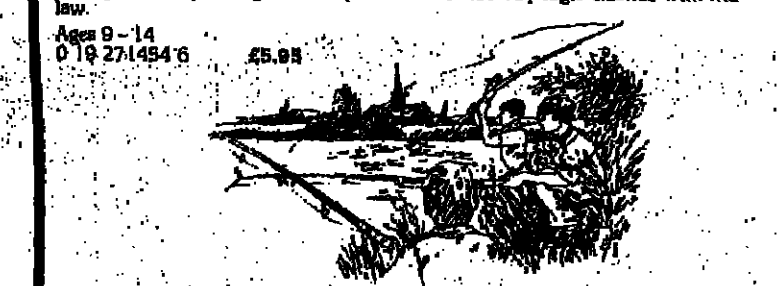
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Hester Barton

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Oxford Books for Children

The raven is mostly regarded as a bird of ill omen. A raven stood on the dying Cuchulainn's shoulder and drank his blood, and Deirdre had a prophetic dream about a raven the night before she and Naisi left Scotland to return to Ireland and death. But the raven has many other qualities in the folk-lore of the Indians and Eskimos of North America. Gail Robinson, the Canadian poet who

continued from previous page

Browne understands the tale through mutation and transformation: the house chimney becomes a cat or a dove; trees sprout faces and hands, tangled roots shading into emaciated animal forms; the witch's arm outstretched to test Hansel's plumpness becomes a hissing serpent when observed as a shadow on the wall. Most of all the pictures play with the concept of bars: a chair back, striped pyjamas, bedheads, a ticking-covered pillow, floorboards, the barred door through which we last see the stepmother, Hansel's cage, Gretel's striped dress; last of all, as terror transmutes into joy, the rainbow which arches over Gretel as she rides home on the duck's back. The house to which she returns is freed from the shadow of the four looming bars which dominate the earlier pictures. These are strong, clear, clean pictures; their coherence stems from an unusual sensitivity to the emotional resonance of the tale.

Aesop's fables tested my patience as a child, and still do. The subversive of narrative to moral is as unsatisfactory in a fable as anywhere else. The real value of "teaching" tales lies in the extent to which they

can make us think for ourselves; Aesop's morals destroy that. And his perfunctory attention to his art of narrative wastes the tales' comic potential. Still, he remains popular enough to have won two new illustrations: Heidi Holder (Aesop's Fables Macmillan £4.95) and Harold Jones (Aesop's Fables Macmillan £5.95). Harold Jones's fresh, witty illustrations give his book a slight edge on charm. That it is the illustrator's quality which counts is shown by Heidi Holder's effort: her sombre, large-scale paintings - painstakingly detailed though they are - overpower the texts.

Fairy tales, fables and fantasies are periodically attacked or "explained away" by one orthodoxy or another. One loud complaint of recent years has been that *The Wind in the Willows* (reprinted with drawings and eight colour plates by E. H. Shepherd, Methuen £5.95) is an idyll based on exploitation. The comfortable lives of Rat, Mole and Toad are an affront; why shouldn't the Wild Wooders taste the good life too? That there is real force in this argument everyone must admit. Yet Jan Needle's *Wild Wood* (illustrated by William Rushton, Andre Deutsch £5.95), an affectionate attempt to

embody that argument in narrative, shows very clearly how badly it misses the mark. The social structure of *The Wind in the Willows* is unequal; the atmosphere is cosy; Toad by any realistic assessment is a homicidal maniac as well as a bon vivant. But none of that matters a jot beside the immense humanity of Grahame's prose. *The Wind in the Willows* is a book about friendship, and there is no cruelty or hatred in it. Its unthinking acceptance of Edwardian social alignments is of minor importance beside the richness of its comedy.

Needle's *Wild Wood* attempts to look at Grahame's comfortable, all-male riverbank world from underneath. The story is told by Buster Ferret, a car mad Wild Wooder employed as a mechanic by Toad. The narrative hangs together well, and it is all very worthy, but Needle creates no characters to rival Grahame's. His reversal of viewpoint is not very funny as it promises to be. *Wild Wood* is a good short story stretched to novel length. When we have admitted the justice of its critique we return cheerfully to its unexciting, incomparable source.

Nell Phillips

With a 'Ho ho ho' and a cotton wool beard

The mere mention of Christmas, it seems from the evidence assembled here, is enough to reduce the most hardened publisher to a state of bewhiskered nostalgia. In his mind's eye he strides along in his buttoned boots, like Christmas morning Scrooge, patting rosy toddlers on the head. Besotted with the heady wine of rampant Yuletide he recklessly abandons all attempts at gritty relevance and repairs to a world of little wooden toys, avuncular Santas doubling as wise men, luminous, striped pine mangers from Habitat, and village churches which cost so much glow on the surrounding wintry countryside that they can only be lit within by ex-Bomber Command parachute flares. For a brief while at least the only hardened character in the world is Pinocchio.

Not surprisingly, given this mood, two publishers have each chosen to produce a version of Clement C. Moore's poem *The Night Before Christmas*, written in 1822.

Oxford University Press presents the poem with large and plentiful illustrations by Tomie de Foulis. His spare and elegant draughtsmanship captures beautifully the mood of the clean and bright New Hampshire countryside in which he chews to see the story.

Ernest Benn gives you, for the same price, £3.95, a delightful pop-up version of the poem. Open the first page and a rectangular house some fourteen centimetres high springs up foursquare to charm the eye and delight the young reader. Other features include a Santa who on the page nips up and down the chimney and on another does a sort of giratic rumba in illustration of the lines

"He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly"
This excerpt also serves to demonstrate the quality of the poem. When I, though, to argue against a hundred and sixty years of popularity?

Another reissue of an old time favourite is Mrs Molesworth's *Christmas Tree Land* (£4.95), a facsimile by Macmillan of their 1884 edition. A charming story, this, in very presentable form.

Stories for Christmas, by Alison Uttley (Penguin £1.00) also does its bit to bring time-tested material before another generation. This Puffin edition, by contrast with some of the other books here discussed, contains a lot of reading for one pound.

Where the Alison Uttley book will give you Metro-style economy at about 350 words to the penny, *The Shepherd's Time* (Macdonald £4.25) is very Aston Martin at about two w.p.p. In this latter case, though, as with the Aston, what you pay for is quality of style and package, and here you get for your money a very well presented set of deceptively simple and very dignified illustrations by Siepan Zavrel to go with Max Bolliger's moving and memorable little tale about a shepherd boy at the Nativity.

The most numerous sub-set of Christmas books comprises those which give the reader a collection of related stories, facts, beliefs and customs. Macdonald's *The Christmas Book* (Susan Baker £2.95), despite a very unpromising cover, contains a satisfying variety of stories and things to do, just the job for keeping a 10 year old occupied during post-turkey ennui.

The Oxford Christmas Book for Children (Roderick Hunt, £5.95) gives you the same kind of thing in larger quantity, albeit at a higher price and probably for older readers. To my eye, though, it is less well presented and depressingly short of colour.

My affection for the domestic cat is about equal to that which I harbour for the Colorado Beetle. Thus, I do not want Pauline Flick's *Christmas Cats* (Collins £3.95) in my stocking thank you. However many people will like it, for it is a nostalgic and tasteful production which sheds light on a curious Victorian fashion.

Every year I stoutly tell my smaller pupils of my unflinching belief in Father Christmas, and try - alas with but small success - to convey to them the notion that the greatest truths and realities are often less tangible and straightforward than those which are more mundane. Who is Father Christmas (Shirley Harrison, David and Charles £3.50) cleaves to the same sort of philosophy and is a very likeable book indeed. It is a lively, fact-filled and imbued with the idea that there is something beyond the vision of a fat man going "Ho-ho" in a cotton-wool beard.

Countdown to Christmas (Lesley Cox and Leslie Foster, Macmillan £2.95) is much more mundane and, irritatingly, contains lists of "Things to do" which somehow know will hardly ever get done. Still, it would make a useful mine of ideas for pre-Christmas work in the junior or infant classroom.

When is a book not a book? When it opens out to make a tableau. *The Nativity* (Kestrel £4.50) is one of these, and is based on the Neopoli-

tan creche displayed each Christmas at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. An ambitious production, it opens out to make a nativity scene nearly three feet long. *Pinocchio and The Christmas Story* (both Chatto and Windus £2.25) also open out into three dimensional scenes. *The Christmas Pageant Cut-Out Book* (Tomie de Foulis, Methuen £1.25) is an inexpensive and creative way of producing the basis of a puppet play or a crib scene. This is a very jolly and stimulating little offering.

Lastly, a group of very pleasant Christmas story books for younger readers. Mrs Peppé needs no introduction, and Mrs Peppé's *Christmas* (Penguin 95p) will not disappoint her fans. Tommy Steele's *Quincy* (Heinemann £3.95), his debut as a children's writer is impressive and shows clear insight into what children like. It tells of a boy who which comes to life and embarks on a Christmas quest to help the rejected toys in the basement of a toy shop, encountering on the way all manner of engaging characters. Lucy and Tom's *Christmas* (Gollancz £3.95) is comfortable, familiar and excellently illustrated by Shirley Hughes - a wonderful sitting-on-the-lap book, well worthy of a good suck

of the thumb. *How Brown Mouse Kept Christmas* (Clyde and Wendy Watson, Hamish Hamilton £3.95) is a good traditional story of a family of mice who emerge on Christmas Eve to explore the wonders of a house which has been prepared for the excitement of the following day. But for me the real attraction of this book is its presentation, which makes it a lovely little book to have about. Frank Muir's *Wint-a-Mess* and the *Cat-Next-Door* (Benn £3.95) is another read and point at the pictures production, but it will also appeal to older children because of its humour and also because of the energetic and very funny illustrations by Joseph Wright.

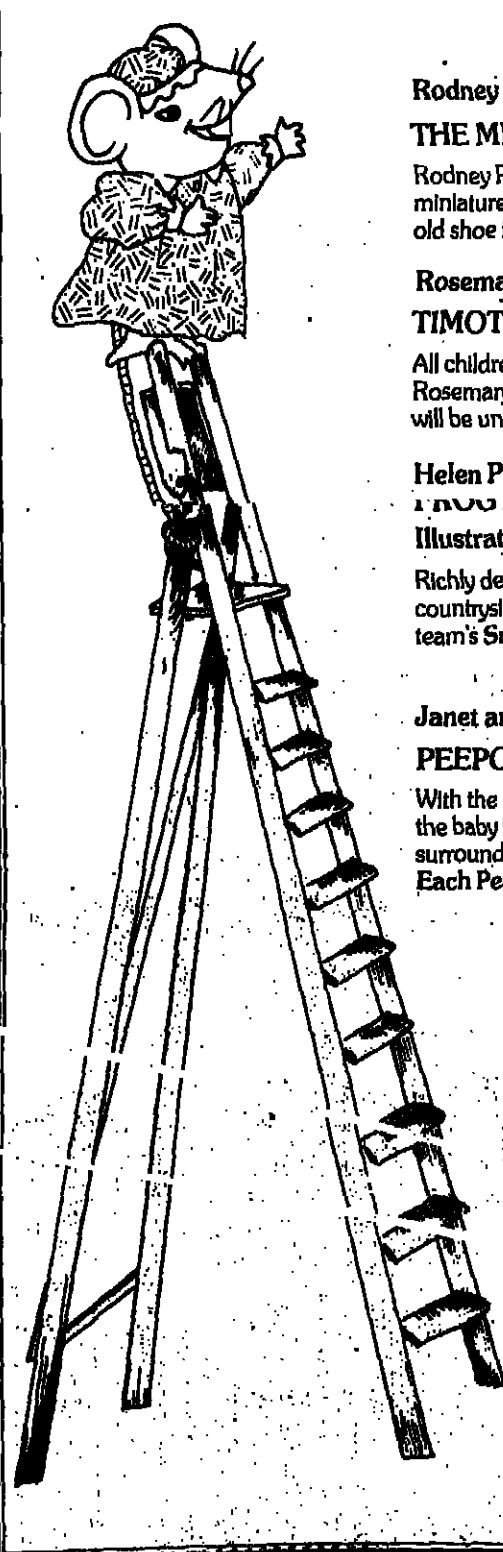
Shirley Harrison, in her book mentioned earlier, quotes the editor of the *New York Sun* who, in 1897, wrote a letter to a girl who had asked about the existence of Santa. "No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

Amien to that, and to the fact that Santa has been down the chimneys of a few publishing houses this year.

Gerald Haigh

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Autonomy, not sympathy, counts

My Brother Barry. By Bill Gillham. Andre Deutsch £4.50. 233 97358 3.
The Alfred Summer. By Jan Slepan. Kestrel £4.75. 7226 5767 6.

Writers for children trade at the border of a world they can never belong to. No-one who belongs to the world of children would wish to inspire it by broadening its horizons. Children bring their lives and not their theories into the playground. If this is true, then those who write not only for children but for disadvantaged minorities as well, trade at the crossroads of three worlds; adulthood, childhood and the world of stigma. They may well belong to the first and to the last, but they are as dependent as any other adult on those conventions whereby we transform meaning to a world we can never own.

Both writers have taken a double trading on themselves. Bill Gillham's competent and spare narrative is told in the third person, but focuses on the problems of James, a boy with a mentally handicapped brother. Against a plot of haystack burning in a community of farmers, his brother's gradual acquisition of expressive language is movingly and accurately described, as is the effect of his handicap upon the whole family. A story of arson, levelled first at some local gypsies, then at some non-local boys, whose sole disadvantage, poverty, is not to have been in a family at James's brother himself, keeps the narrative pace moving briskly. An infinite regression of novels could be imagined whereby the villain of the first book are taken up as the minority heroes of the next in which they encounter the villain of so-and-so who just turns out to be the hero of the next etc.

Jan Slepan's novel, like the first, deals with a mentally handicapped boy, this time through the eyes of a physically handicapped, narrator whose first person experience of *Barry* is, in the last analysis, altered: his friend, obese and socially incompetent Myron, the boat builder and leader of a little gang of disadvantaged children. With much humour, aplomb and skill the tale reaches an amusing conclusion.

Yet for all the skill of both writers their stories are dull offerings. In Bill Gillham's case that fatal lack of humour in current British fiction combined with an over-dedicated pastoral concern makes for an uninspiring read. Jan Slepan's sheer descriptive and ethnic bravura tends to mask the episodic triteness which makes up his plot.

The immense promise and poor reward of both only reinforces the point that if the imaginations of children are to be appealed to, then only the established conventions of the trade will furnish a means. There is no secret passage to the experience of childhood which the writer need only hint at; spontaneous bolt-hole to enter.

Two simple rules of thumb are relevant to the type of literature being considered here. To begin with, no story explicitly written for minority interests can succeed unless it could have succeeded just as well without mentioning the particular problems of its protagonists. Secondly, a clear distinction must be made between the pathos of a character's condition and that character's involvement in a narrative. It is the autonomy of the handicapped protagonist that counts, not fifty seven varieties of sympathy.

Duncan McGibbon

childrens books

Nonsense not nauseous

No one was ever meant to read nine collections of largely comic verse at a go, and I had some bad moments when doing it. "When poetry grins, it doesn't half grin," reads one crabbed note. There are these Australian, shouting gaily about dandruff, and all those echoes of Harry Graham, insistent ruthlessness, and swollen derivatives of Belloc. They all laugh on the highest possible note, and I see little mouths tightening and little senses of humour refusing to respond. Then I'm out again in the sunshine — perhaps with the excellent David McCord: "Mr Bidery's Spider Garden": "With cabbages so odorous, / Snapdragons so expodory / At twilight all is loadery" or Spike Milligan, who is some marvellous sense has never left the playground or ceased to chalk on walls. "Crake is going West, / So Tony is going East; / But tiny Fred / Just lies in bed, / The lazy little beast."

For the youngest audience, and quite the most beautifully printed of these books (I wish the typeface was named), *Str-A-About* (Julia Macrae Books, £2.75) is compiled by Nancy Chambers from rhymes and songs from anonymous sources (including that grand benediction that contains the line: "Bless the wing and bless the fin, / Bless the air I travel in"); together with a poem or two by the compiler herself, good enough to be long there, as are the delicately strong line drawings by Carolyn Bull. Doug Milliband wrote *The Mischief of Millicent* (Mary (Pepper Press, £3.75) which does, I must say, have about it a touch of Belloc turned gurgulous. But I was won to accident-prone Millicent, as I believe children may be: I think my conversion was completed by a line that described her (in the middle of a complex social tragedy) as going "into a handspring that just wasn't on..." Louise Voce illustrates suitably in that style in which faces are expressive potatoes almost bisected by long thin mouths.

What I like about Michael Rosen is that he's comic and boisterous and a poet of confusions, as I guess any children's poet has to be; but he doesn't set out to keep things even lastingly hectic, as some of his colleagues do. You can have him in hardback, new poems mixed with old (You can't catch me!, Andre Deutsch, £4.95), or in paperback (Wouldn't you like to know, Puffin,

90p), and in both cases you have Quentin Blake's drawings thrown in — which is the last thing they are, being the perfect equivalents of Mr Rosen's thoughtful casualness. Here's a poet who has a gift of brevity, as in:

Your brother Danny's got a golden nose
and fish swim out of his eyes.
Your brother Danny's got legs like rhubarb
and ears like apple pies —

which certainly needs its illustration — girl ecstatic, leg uplifted, girl glum, lollipop unfurled — but puts admiration and the reverse of it into the nearest of nutshells. But he's also a poet with a rambling gift, who shows, in some of his best verse, how far from being ordinary are the most ordinary of events.

More Stuff and Nonsense, compiled by Michael Dugan (Collins, £3.95), is from Australia, and rumbustious. Harry Graham is one of the exemplars here: as in the compiler's poem that begins

When Billy set his aunt on fire
He squealed with great delight
'Look how Auntie's burning, Dad!
It makes the room so bright.'

which is the dampest echo of the original, to whom even the hero's name is owed. There's imitation Lewis Carroll ("He took his trusty smumblewhack"), and a great deal about glutony and hairiness: what a poem makes ugly, Roland Harvey's illustrations sometimes make uglier. But there are quieter, amusing poems here, caught up in the general bluster. I have to say that at ten or 11 I'd almost certainly have delighted in it.

But *The Puffin Book of Funny Verse* (85p), compiled by Julia Verne, and *Never Wear Your Wellies in the House* (Sparrow Books 85p), collected (the dustjackets make this distinction of verb) by Tom Baker, demonstrate that stuff doesn't have to be hysterical or nonsense nauseous. Of all these comic anthologies, the former casts its net widest, so that substantial poets, Causeys and Leas and Emily Dickinsons, exist alongside Milligans and Rosens and A. A. Milnes — and even some rare, genuine Harry Grams. A nice collection — or compilation — with added illustrations (added, that is, to Belloc and Leas and others) that insist on the jokes to such an extent that one harks. They're illustrations that

won't leave laughter alone.

A royalty on each copy of Tom Baker's book goes to MENCAP, the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults; and the illustrations are by children from special schools. As it happens, these are among the best illustrations in all nine books; and in saying so I'm not moved by sentimental indulgence. Look at the lion that accompanies Roald Dahl's tribute to that beast, and name me a depiction more leonine. There's Harry Graham again ("Uncle, whose inventive brains / Kept evolving aeroplanes, / Fell from an enormous height / On my garden lawn, last night"), graced with an uncle falling with pure perpendicularity, in blackest ink, that reads the poem perfectly: it's about nothing less than falling fatally on the very crown of the head. Mr Baker has chosen well, and need not have coughed awkwardly, as he does, by way of introduction. Of course laughter is poetic.

Who are the Mewlips? Clue: they dwell in shadows dark and wet as ink. Answer: they are the heroes of a poem by Tolkien, one of the less familiar in David Woolger's *Magic Trees* (poems of fantasy and mystery) (Oxford, £4.95) that interestingly balances the well-known ("The Listeners", "The splendour falls...") with the less- or never-anthologised. This collection is not so adventurous, though, or so well printed — and I guess for poetry the print matters particularly — as Brian Patten's *Gangsters, Ghosts and Dragonflies*, subtitle "A Book of Story Poems" (Allen and Unwin, £6.95). Mr Patten claims that he's preferred poems that are "inventive and fresh" — and that these are: but what strikes me as a less subjective claim is that they all begin with one of a variety of bangs: "There were six heads / Identical sexuplets" (D. M. Thomas); "The old sick green parrot" (Stevie Smith); "Once earth there roams a lonely kook" (Christian Morgenstern); "The washing machine was whirling away" (George MacBain). I was talking to a teacher recently who said he calculated that, if he wanted to catch attention with a poem he had about three seconds to do it. In many of the poems here would plunge in their hooks in one second flat.

Edward Blishen

Point to points

Tales of Horsemen. By R. B. Cunningham Graham. Edited and illustrated by Alexander Maitland. Canongate. £5.95. 0 903937 92 1. My Favourite Ballet Stories. Edited by Beryl Grey. Lutterworth Press. £5.50. 0 7188 2475 X. **Mysterious Menacing and Macabre.** An anthology chosen by Helen Bente. £4.95. 0 460 06086 4. **The Beaver Book of Horror Stories.** Edited by Mark Ronson. Beaver Books. 95p. 0 600 20383 2. **Broomsticks and Beesticks.** Edited by Barbara Slegh. Hodder and Stoughton. £5.95. 0 340 25948 5.

R. B. Cunningham Graham (1852-1936), Liberal M.P. for North Lanark and later co-organiser, with Keir Hardie, of the Scottish Labour Party, is depicted in Sir John Lavery's portrait not addressing a political rally nor, as a Scottish-Spanish aristocrat, surveying his estates, but "aloof and splendid, wearing a sombrero, astride his favourite horse." This aloofness did not prevent him working untingeringly for his constituents — mainly coalminers and factory-workers. But horses were his true love, his incomparable knowledge of them having been gained at first hand on the Argentinean pampas and the plains of Mexico and North Africa. Graham excels himself in his impassioned description of the rolling steppes of the Rio Grande and the horsemanship of the gauchos and the men born almost on their horses, sitting on them like centaurs — handling them as skilled mechanics use a precision instrument.

It is an odd surprise, after the torrid Argentinean heat and the heady equestrian exploits of the gauchos, to come upon the portrait of Graham's eccentric aunt, among the finest of his kind in English prose. "My aunt, I fancy, could she have chosen, would have gone to some heaven half stable half country house..." She died as she had lived, after arranging her own funeral with the undertaker, enjoining him to be sure that the hearse was not started with a jerk and all his beasts were sound.

The untutored reader of Beryl Grey's collection might be forgiven for concluding that design, costume, scenic effects, lighting and music were what mattered most in ballet.

But perhaps, after all, that's how it should be, for the number of significant different movements of arms, legs, feet or head is strictly finite. Cyril Beaumont's chapter lends some

weight to this for he devotes most of his space to designers and directors. Richard Buckle's extract (from his biography of Nijinsky) makes dates and times mysteriously important. "Dinghlev was in London on October 10th, as we know from the date of a cable he sent to Astruc. He had probably left Vasilav at the Hotel Scribe but they were together again on the 27th, as proved by a postmark on the following letterhead." Ram Gopal's exquisite piece describes a thunderstorm, mentioning briefly that he danced in the rain.

There are interesting historical accounts by Sacheverell Sitwell and Ivor Gurnall and welcome light relief from Caryl Brahms (*A Ballet in the Ballet*) but the book is really worth buying for Isadora Duncan's biographical reminiscences and Richard Findlater's portrayal of the incomparable Lilian Baylis, pillar of the Old Vic and co-creator of the revived Sadlers Wells.

Man versus rat on a minute plot: a birthday gift of a skeleton to a medical student; a granny going dolefully at her erstwhile beam in his coffin, dead 60 since; a Nazi executioner at work in the Third Reich. Take your pick from Helen Holt's collection. Or, for further choice, you might fancy a Hammer Studio Film, scenario by prestigious SF writer H. P. Lovecraft. His story, though, (also viewable as a send-up by the Carry On fraternity) is ultimately a flop; one feels cheated at being made to get all steamed up by an accumulation of otiose detail and forgettable names. What a relief to turn to E. Phillips Oppenheim's old-fashioned thriller.

The Beaver Book has more Lorentz but here he has gone in for an aggregation of foul and nasty things which finally becomes self-defeating. Like the lighting-up of interminable cigarettes in the old Hollywood films, slime and fungus (SF) is indispensable ingredients of horror stories. Among the 19 writers these spooky books, there are a mere three women. And to think that Mary Shelley started it all.

Some fine poems by, among others, Ben Jonson, Walter de la Mare, Robert Graves and Ian Macmillan, enliven the pleasantly produced *Broomsticks and Beesticks*. It's a good mix of retold traditional tales and one (to me) unfamiliar one about a child Baba Yaga, the unique honey-legged, iron-toothed witch of Russian lore. The current vogue for slim tradition to support it, but some old crones remain firm favourites.

Stephen Corrin

Fell country

The Hollow Land. By Jane Gardam. Julia MacRae. £5.25.

Jane Gardam's is an OK name in the world of children's fiction. *The Hollow Land* has been acclaimed and has just won a Whitbread award. I feel uncomfortable in offering a dissenting opinion. But it has to be done. If this book were the work of an unknown writer I would think it promising, though imperfect. Coming with the credentials it actually has, it's a slight disappointment.

The Hollow Land is Westmorland fell country, hollow because of underground rivers and old mine workings. The book consists of nine episodes, spread over more than 20 years, and all occurring during the visits of a London family who rent a farmhouse in the area. Each episode involves both visitors and local people, especially the nearby farming family.

Geographically and emotionally, the book comes close to territory occupied by William Mayne in *A Grass Rope* and, especially, *Reverie*. Stylistically, too, there are some resemblances, including touches of Maynellie whimsy. Yet Mrs Gardam has her individual flavour. She has a pleasantly quirky mind and a fine comic gift. Though there is nothing

here that quite matches her glorious funny set-pieces in *Blagwater* or *The Summer After the Funeral*, there are some nice chapters, for instance the one about Granny Crick, who has taken to her bed, but come down when there's nobody about.

Two episodes have more dramatic action: the trapping of a couple of boys underground and the appearance of a distant relative from South America claiming the reversion of the farmstead and wanting to put it down and mine under it. But these are dealt with perfunctorily, almost as if the author were ashamed of introducing such commonplace children's-book ingredients. Like many other books, this one strikes me as being "for" children only in the sense that it doesn't contain anything which is obviously not for children.

Disappointment sets in because it is all, I think, rather sketchy and casual. Sometimes a speaking necessity is caught with enviable accuracy, other times it is surprisingly miscast. Some characters, notably the farming family, are full of life and vigour; others are uninteresting and like the "Household Word" (a lady) stereotyped. There's a carelessness about ages and relationships and, more important, the future to shape and sharpen. The *Hollow Land* reads to me like a draft of a potentially excellent book that still needs working on.

John Rowe-Townsend

childrens books

Bites of the apple

The Girl Who Wanted A Boy. By Paul Zindel. Bodley Head. £3.95. 0 370 30905 7. **Lizzie's Floating Shop.** By John Wain. Bodley Head. £3.50. 0 370 30906 5. **Vicky.** By Catherine Storr. Faber. £4.95. 0 571 11762 7. **Ruby.** By Rosa Guy. Gollancz. £5.50. 0 575 03052 6.

To judge from contemporary stories for and about the teenage girl, all she needs is the counsel of a middle-aged-to-elderly man. He may be her father or her uncle. He may be her devoted admirer like 16-year-old Vicky's 48-year-old policeman in Catherine Storr's new novel. But whatever the relationship, he's always around when she's in trouble, whether with kindness, smelling of tobacco (which, in fiction, brings comfort, not lung cancer); strong, patient, attentive, insightful; a solid rock of sanity and calm, amid the raging storms of mean-spirited threats.

Nobody sells this formula more successfully than Paul Zindel. His latest ingenue, Sibella Cametta, aged 15, specialises in part-time carpentry and electronic repairs. She lives near New York with her glamorous elder sister and divorced mother who control their own succession of resident men-friends "like puppets". Both women reproach Sibella for being socially and sexually retarded, and despite her scientific interests and mechanical skills, Maureen lends her a book on "How to Pick Up Boys" and follows this up with a practical lesson in seduction from handsome 17-year-old Bertram, whom she pays a hundred dollars to give Sibella "a few kisses and feels for an hour."

But Sibella has already fallen for Dan, a disturbed drop-out who works at the midge race-track. She confides in her diary: "I worship him. I pray for him. I ask God to be his and watch over him..." (That's just a start. In rendering young love New York style, both Zindel and Rosa Guy compile their prose as if the Song of Solomon had to be translated into advertising copy.) When Maureen heartlessly broadcasts these private effusions,

Sister spirit

The Time of The Ghost. By Diana Wynne Jones. Macmillan. £4.95. 0 333 320123.

It takes a writer of exceptional skill, sensitivity and sharply disciplined imagination to tell an absorbing, poignant and often hilariously funny story from the point of view of a disembodied spirit who is frequently unsure whose consciousness she carries. Miss Wynne Jones achieves this miracle by making the poor puzzled ghost seek avidly for clues to her defined visual images the narrow focus of her attention beams in on,

Sibella is driven to consult her favourite person in his laboratory. Mr Cametta, chemical wizard and "big one-hundred-per-cent-pure sweetheart", warns: "Don't turn into the same kind of pain in the ass your mother did." His appreciation of his daughter, "the most cherished invention I have ever made", sees her through a generous gesture to its bitter-sweet conclusion.

After the excesses of Zindel's Oedipal hype, it's a relief to rediscover British phlegm in wise men of few words. John Wain's 14-year-old Lizzie escapes whenever she can from the carping gossip of her mother and aunt, to the peaceful narrow-boat of gentle Uncle Robert. His retirement-plans for a long canal trip are thwarted by his wife whose opposition precipitates a heart-attack. While he is in hospital, Lizzie borrows the boat with the secret hope of raising funds for her elder brother, a brilliant musician who needs an Amati violin. She stocks up with groceries and sells them to holiday-makers, helped in this clandestine enterprise by brawny brainless Kevin, whose proletarian peculiarities — such as "garage" pronounced "garidge" — receive more fastidious authorial comment than one might think they deserved. Can't we have a spirited heroine with a crisp line in repartee, without the snobbish foil of an inarticulate "local yokel"?

To be sure, Kevin's sterling worth is eventually rewarded, just as Martin, a rich young philistine of high I.Q., loses his air-gun in a well-merited reprisal for taking aim at a heron. The beauty of this bird and its movements in the summer landscape constitute the chief pleasure of this book.

Vicky is dedicated by one distinguished writer to another, Marghanita Howard (née Laski). Yet it reads like an exercise in the common touch, a monochrome study of simple souls, a paradoxical attempt to convey drama and mystery through the mundane activities of unadorned, down-market characters, drinking tea, washing up, hoovering carpets, clearing off drawers. Mr Stanford is as ordinary as possible, "standard" as his name implies, laced

and by enabling the reader to experience with her the shock of the flitting electricity that surrounds the living.

This is not the only way in which she turns the conventional ghost story on its head: for she has the wandering spirit, driven by desperation, deal far more rationally with events than the supposedly sensible people, whose behaviour is super-naturally outrageous. All the ghost knows is that she is one of four sisters, neglected by their harassed and ineffectual parents who run a boys' boarding school. Left to themselves the adolescent girls have turned into monstrous caricatures making bizarre and useless bids for the attention of their mother and father; and attempting to enliven the

nic and undemonstrative even in bereavement. His wife's sudden death prompts their adopted daughter to trace her own origins, a quest which engages the sympathy of Detective Inspector Price and leads them both to the wilds of Cornwall.

The dust-jacket shows Vicky hesitating between tomb-stones. Well she might, for the exigencies of the plot focus attention throughout the opening chapters upon women who are already dead. Then towards the end, when a putative grandmother and father are within sight, a defensive reticence makes Vicky withdraw, deferring contact to the indefinite future. So, first and last, the story disappoints.

Sibling rivalry is, by common consent, the curse of adolescence. In all these novels, sisters suffer from comparisons concerning their looks, intelligence, poise and prospects. Rosa Guy's trilogy is unusual, however, in that patriarchal authority is the source of the girls' problems, not their salvation and solace.

Calvin Cathy has brought his family from the West Indies to Harlem where he struggles to survive as a restaurateur, and exacts old-fashioned obedience from his daughters with a leather belt. *Ruby* takes up the story where *The Friends* left it, elaborating earlier motifs, such as the conflict between black pupils and racially prejudiced teachers who are themselves vulnerable and intimidated.

Publication in Britain may have been delayed by misgivings about Ruby's passion for her class-mate, Daphne, a voluptuous autodidact who combines grooming with genius, and quotes Shakespeare, Longfellow and chairman Mao. The girl's mental and physical communion is indeed embarrassing, but no more so than the routine insertion of Young Adult love-scenes elsewhere — "Lizzie had, so to speak, stayed kissed." An occasional quail, blush or squirm of embarrassment is a small price to pay for the rare authenticity of Rosa Guy's Harlem and her unrivalled knowledge of the milieu she depicts.

Marion Glastonbury

boredom of their days by contriving crazy occult rituals centred on an old rag doll.

The moral, which runs unashamedly through the book, is that such games are destructive; and is not until the very last page that the sisters are freed from the mass of natural misery and supernatural terror in which they are entangled. To say too much about how that is done would be to wreck the cumulative suspense of a story generously supplied with hints and clues. I will only reveal the one embedded in the title. The ghost's time is not chronological, but weaves back and forth across seven years, redeeming the past to restore the future.

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